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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to describe and illustrate the procedure for setting up a school-community relations program. The first chapter describes the following recommended components of such a program: using a programmatic approach, using the five school-community relations processes, and designating the primary responsibilities for the program. The next four chapters explain the procedure for implementing a program with these components. Each chapter includes a description of the goals, an explanation of the process, and a case study illustrating one step in setting up the program. By following the recommended sequence and suggestions, the paper claims, a school can establish an effective school-community relations program. (Author)

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Practical Paper No. 21

COMMUNITY RELATIONS FOR SCHOOLS

by

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Studies of Administration and Organization for Instruction

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
List of Tables and Figures.		ix
List of Samples		xi
Abstract.		xiii
CHAPTER		
I	A MODEL SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS PROGRAM.	1
	A Programmatic Approach	1
	Steps in Implementing a Program of School-Community Relations.	2
	Advantages of a Programmatic Approach to School-Community Relations	4
	The Five Process Approach	4
	Processes to Be Incorporated.	5
	Advantages to Incorporating the Processes of School-Community Relations	6
	Responsibilities in Implementing a School-Community Relations Program.	7
	Essential Responsibilities.	7
	Organizing.	7
	Motivating.	8
	Implementing.	8
	Coordinating.	8
	Evaluating.	9
	Program Goals and Anticipated Outcomes.	10
II	NEEDS ASSESSMENT.	13
	Goals of the Needs Assessment Process	13
	The Needs Assessment Process.	14
	Method of Data Collection	15
	Content of Data Collection Mechanisms	18
	Who to Collect Data From.	22
	Initiating Contact.	22
	Collecting Data	25
	Compiling Data.	25

TABLE OF CONTENTS
(continued)

CHAPTER		Page
II	NEEDS ASSESSMENT (continued)	
	Needs Assessment--A Case Study.	27
III	PROGRAM PLANNING.	45
	Goals of the Planning Process	45
	The Planning Process.	47
	Translating Needs into Goals.	49
	Establishing Priorities among the Goals	50
	Selecting an Approach to High-priority Goals. .	54
	Selecting Activities.	54
	Planning the Activities	55
	The Planning Process--A Case Study.	59
IV	PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION.	67
	The Goal of the Implementation Process.	67
	The Implementation Process.	68
	Acquiring Additional Essential Resources. . . .	68
	Meeting Specified Timelines	69
	Fulfilling the Designated Responsibilities. . .	70
	Evaluating Plans and Activities	71
	Program Implementation--A Case Study.	71
V	PROGRAM EVALUATION.	113
	The Goal of Program Evaluation.	113
	The Evaluation Process.	114
	Method of Data Collection	114
	Interviews.	114
	Questionnaires.	115
	Observations.	116
	Utilizing Program Evaluation Data	120

TABLE OF CONTENTS
(continued)

CHAPTER		Page
V	PROGRAM EVALUATION (continued)	
	Program Evaluation--A Case Study.	121
	Formal Summative Program Evaluation	121
	Informal Formative and Summative Program Evaluation.	142
	Utilization of Program Evaluation Data for Future Program Planning	143
CONCLUSION.		146
NOTE.		147

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Content of the Data Collection Mechanism.	20
2	Numbers of Community Members to Select for Data Collection According to Size of School's Student Body.	23
3	Suggestions for Conducting a Successful Interview.	26
4	Staff Worksheet	51
5	Goal Prioritizing Worksheet	53
6	Activities for Meeting School-Community Relations Goals	56

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Steps in setting up a school-community relations program	3
2	The six-step needs assessment process	15
3	Matrix for recording data on existing groups in terms of interaction processes being utilized.	28

LIST OF SAMPLES

Sample		Page
1	Staff Interview Schedule.	30
2	Letter of Introduction to Community Members	34
3	School-Community Interview Schedule	35
4	Strengths of the School	40
5	Summary of Responses to Checklist Questions	41
6	Summary of Interaction Processes Utilization. . . .	42
7	Teacher Responsibilities in School-Community Relations	43
8	Letter Accompanying Needs Assessment Report to Community Members	61
9	Subunit Activities for Improving the Reporting of Pupil Progress	65
10	Good Work Tickets	72
11	Addition and Subtraction Awards	73
12	Busy as a Bee Award	74
13	Preconference Inventory	76
14	Parent Agenda	78
15	Conference Survey	79
16	Conference Survey--Unit D	80
17	Potluck Information Letter.	81
18	Unit E Potluck--Evaluation.	82
19	Question and Answer Coffee--Evaluation.	83

LIST OF SAMPLES
(continued)

Sample		Page
20	Parent Invitation Letter.	86
21	Pre-K Newsletter	87
22	Sample Newsletter	90
23	Subunit C--Conference Survey Results.	97
24	Subunit D--Conference Survey Results.	100
25	Subunit E--Potluck Evaluation	104
26	Question-and-Answer Coffee #3--Evaluation	107
27	Questions Asked at Question-and-Answer Coffee #3. .	108
28	Roles and Responsibilities in Implementing School-Community Relations Activities	111
29	School-Community Relations Questionnaire.	117
30	Staff Program Evaulation Questionnaire.	123
31	Parent Program Evaluation Questionnaire	125
32	Staff Questionnaire--Results.	127
33	Parent Questionnaire--Results	133

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this practical paper is to describe and illustrate the procedure for setting up a school-community relations program. The first chapter describes the following recommended components of such a program: (a) using a programmatic approach; (b) using the five school-community relations processes; and (c) designating the primary responsibilities for the program. The next four chapters explain the procedure for implementing a program with these components. Each chapter includes a description of the goals, an explanation of the process, and a case study illustrating one step in setting up the program. By following the recommended sequence and suggestions, a school can establish an effective school-community relations program. This program should result in improved relations between the school and the community it serves.

CHAPTER I

A MODEL SCHOOL-COMMUNITY RELATIONS PROGRAM

The present educational environment requires that school districts concentrate on creating good relations between the school and community. To overcome the disasterous results of many of the existing short-sighted approaches to school-community relations, a programmatic approach to relating with the community must be taken. Consideration must also be given to including a variety of school-community relations processes in addition to communication, which is the process typically relied upon by schools.

The first section of this chapter discusses the procedure for implementing a school-community relations program, as well as the advantages of such a program. The second portion explains the need to use the five recommended school-community relations processes in setting up a program. The third part discusses the primary responsibilities in setting up a school-community relations program. Finally, the last section considers the outcomes which may be anticipated from implementing a school-community relations program with the recommended processes and responsibilities.

A Programmatic Approach

A programmatic approach to school-community relations is essential, but it must be carefully planned and well-organized. Such an approach includes setting both short- and long-term goals, based upon the needs

of the school. A school-community relations program also specifies responsibilities for school staff members in relating with the community. A third essential element of a program is to specify evaluation procedures.

Steps in Implementing a Program of School-Community Relations

The implementation of a school-community relations program is a six-phase process, as illustrated in Figure 1. The initial step is to assess the school-community relations needs of the school. The objective of the needs assessment is to identify problems and needs which exist between the school and community, and to locate people and groups associated with those problems.

Once the needs assessment has taken place, goals and objectives must be set. Goals and objectives can be based on the identified problems and associated groups; the problems must be translated into positive goal statements. Another source of goals and objectives is the desire of the school staff to improve or expand existing school-community relations activities.

After goals and objectives have been specified, consideration of possible school-community relations activities can begin. Any selected activities should both meet the goals and objectives for school-community relations, and be appropriate for the school staff.

At the next stage, more planning, which revolves around the selected activities, occurs. Among the necessary plans are to determine which staff member(s) will be responsible for organizing each

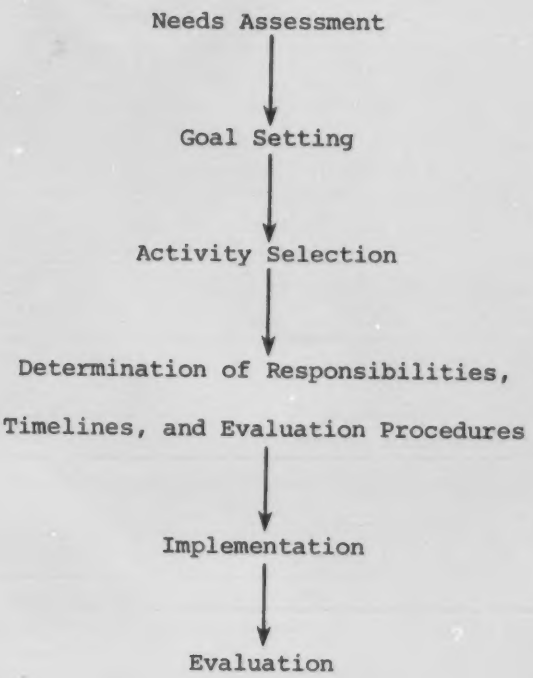


Figure 1. Steps in setting up a school-community relations program.

activity and for putting the plans into operation. Timelines for the various stages of each individual activity, as well as for the overall program, must be set. Consideration must also be given to how each activity, and the total program, will be evaluated for their effectiveness.

When plans have been completed, the activities, responsibilities, timelines, and evaluation procedures must be implemented. The final step is to evaluate the school-community relations program.

Advantages of a Programmatic Approach to School-Community Relations

Among the advantages of a programmatic approach to school-community relations is that such an approach provides a long-range orientation. Program planning originates far in advance of when the plans need to be implemented. Planning takes place prior to the development of problems and crises and seeks to avoid situations involving conflict.

Another advantage is that a school-community relations program is tailor-made for a particular school. Activities are selected on the basis of their appropriateness for the needs of the school, rather than for their current popularity among educators.

The Five Process Approach

A second essential element of a school-community relations program is the inclusion of five key school-community relations processes. As mentioned earlier, communication is often considered to be a sufficient process for relating with the community. However, it is

important to include other processes such as analysis, involvement, participation, and problem solving.

Processes to Be Incorporated

An effective program of school-community relations includes opportunities to incorporate five processes. Though a school will rarely include equal amounts of all five, staff members should at least ask themselves whether they are currently including the processes and whether they should be including them.

The first process, analysis, implies an examination of each issue and problem which exists between the school and community. It also includes an assessment of which community members are associated with each issue. Such techniques as interviews, questionnaires, and surveys may be used for analysis.

The communication process is a second essential element of school-community relations. In addition to the frequent, one-way communication pattern from the school to the homes of students, two-way communication must be considered. This implies communication which originates from the students' homes, and from nonparents in the community such as parents of parochial school students, community members with grown children, and community members without children. Two-way communication is encouraged through school-community coffees, parent-teacher conferences, and citizen advisory councils.

A third process for school-community relations is involvement. A community member becomes involved with the school when he or she donates valuable resources such as time or money. Examples are

volunteering to help in the classroom, designing bulletin boards or costumes at home, and chaperoning field trips.

Fourth, schools need to consider the participation of community members in educational decision making. Participation may center on the educational program of a particular child, or it may include general educational policies of the school. Parent-teacher conferences and citizen advisory councils are opportunities for community participation in decision making.

A fifth process is problem solving or resolution. This process involves reducing conflict over problems which are developing or already have developed. Conflict may be reduced by using persuasion, power, bargaining, or rational decision making.

Advantages to Incorporating the Processes of School-Community Relations

There are numerous reasons for including all five processes in a school-community relations program. First, analysis and problem solving help solve or arrest problems before major conflict develops. Analysis encourages early detection of problems when solutions can be quickly initiated.

The five processes also provide for integrating the community into the school program. Community members become familiar with the program because they are involved and helping to make educational decisions. Integrating the community with the school will hopefully provide community support for the school and its program.

Finally, the processes encourage the inclusion of all community members in school-community relations, rather than only the parents

of school children. The five processes are directed at both parents and nonparents so there is community-wide support for the school.

Responsibilities in Implementing a School-Community Relations Program

Implementation of a school-community relations program is an endeavor in which the entire school is involved. In the discussion which follows, the essential responsibilities involved in implementing a program are explained and suggestions are made as to the individuals within the school who should assume these responsibilities.

Essential Responsibilities

There are five essential responsibilities involved in implementing a school-community relations program. These include: (a) organizing the program efforts, (b) motivating staff members to be interested in and participate in the program, (c) implementing the plans, (d) coordinating the implementation effort, and (e) evaluating the plans and activities which have been implemented.

Organizing. Key to the success of a school-community relations program is organization. It is essential that the entire approach be carefully planned and organized before beginning and along every step of the way to insure proper planning and goal setting.

The school principal will undoubtedly be the primary organizer of the school-community relations program as a whole, unless the school is among the few with a staff member whose primary responsibility is community relations. Other key staff members will likely share

responsibilities for organizing individual program activities.

Motivating. Staff members need to be kept informed about the school-community relations program from its inception. Their motivation, support, and interest will make each step in the process more easily attainable and the program will be more likely to succeed.

Motivation can be generated in several ways. First, an enthusiastic principal can take time to explain to the staff the need for a programmatic approach. Second, the principal can work with several key staff members within the building and they, in turn, may be able to generate interest and support among the remaining staff. A third approach is to rely on an outside school-community relations consultant to explain the importance of a good school-community relations program, and the essential steps and processes involved. In addition, this paper will provide further assistance in creating staff interest and support.

Implementing. As soon as plans and responsibilities have been determined, implementation can begin. Although the entire staff will participate in the implementation effort, various staff members will be involved to varying degrees at any given time.

Coordinating. As plans are being implemented, a key person or persons must oversee the total program, and make sure that everyone assumes their responsibilities at the appropriate time and that individual activities work together as a total program.

Typically, the principal is in the best position to oversee school-wide efforts. A school staff member specifically responsible for community relations could serve as coordinator. A third alternative

would be to have the principal plus key teachers coordinate the implementation efforts.

Evaluating. During implementation and upon completion of an individual activity, an evaluation should be obtained from all staff and community members who were involved. Among the areas which must be evaluated are the effective and ineffective aspects of the activity, the success of the activity in meeting its goal(s), and the effectiveness of the organizing, motivating, and coordinating responsibilities. Future activity planning should incorporate effective aspects and seek solutions to ineffective ones.

The evaluation of individual school-community relations activities should involve all staff and community members who participated in the activity. Responsibility for evaluating the activities should be assumed by the staff members who were most directly involved in organizing and coordinating the activity. A staff member with a school-wide perspective, such as the principal or person in charge of community relations, should be responsible for coordinating the evaluation of each of the various activities.

The total program must be evaluated as well. Of concern are the effectiveness of each aspect of the program, the success of the program in meeting its goals, and the effectiveness of the designated organizing, coordinating, and motivating responsibilities for the program. Future program planning must incorporate the effective aspects and eliminate the ineffective ones.

Total program evaluation will require the participation of everyone

involved in the program. The coordinator will probably be the principal, the staff member in charge of school-community relations, or an outside person who has maintained a school-wide perspective of the program.

Program Goals and Anticipated Outcomes

The implementation of a school-community relations program, with the essential programmatic and process elements and responsibilities, has proven to result in better relations between the school and community (Karges, 1977). Throughout an entire school year, a program of school-community relations, incorporating all six implementation steps, all five school-community relations processes, and the essential responsibilities, was implemented at a pilot school. At the end of the year, almost all parents of the students reported seeing at least some improvement in school-community relations; a number of parents thought the program resulted in much improvement. These latter parents perceived themselves as having increased accessibility to the school, which helped them feel freer to approach staff members with their school-related problems and concerns. They also reported that the school had made good progress in reflecting the wishes and desires of the community. This was interpreted as evidence of increased legitimacy of the school among the parents.

It is anticipated that many of the same improvements would result from similar efforts in other schools. Community members will undoubtedly perceive that they have greater access to the school and its staff. In the eyes of the community, the school and its staff will

become more legitimate as it reflects their wishes and desires. As a result, their support for the school's program and staff will increase. It is hoped that the ultimate outcome of maximum student growth and development will also be achieved. As parents and nonparents' support of the school increases, student attitudes will become increasingly positive toward the school and its program. An anticipated outcome of improved attitudes is maximum cognitive development of students.

CHAPTER II

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The initial step in the initiation of a school-community relations program is conducting an assessment of the present school-community relations needs. The areas of concern in a needs assessment are: (a) identifying school-community relations problems and issues which exist among community and school staff members, and (b) comparing existing school-community relations with an ideal school-community relations program. The needs assessment data will provide a base for planning a program tailored to the particular school and its needs.

This chapter focuses on three aspects of the needs assessment. First, the goals of the needs assessment are discussed. Second, the actual needs assessment process is described. Included are suggestions on determining what data need to be gathered, collecting necessary data, selecting people to obtain data from, and compiling the collected data. The third section reports a case study in which an actual needs assessment was conducted.

Goals of the Needs Assessment Process

A needs assessment permits the identification of existing school-community relations concerns and people who share them. Some concerns are directly related to school-community relations. Examples include lack of participation in the PTA or the extent to which community members feel welcome to visit the school. Indirect concerns may center on the school instructional program or on discipline in the lunchroom.

Although the latter issues are not reactions to how the school and community interact, they do involve school philosophy and may easily affect relations between the school and community.

Attention must be devoted to distinguishing whether each concern is held mainly by the staff or by community members. This information will help identify which group(s) are associated with each issue, as well as the extent of their concern.

A second goal of the needs assessment process is to determine the discrepancies which exist between the existing and the ideal school-community relations program for the school. The ideal program includes the six steps, five processes, and five responsibilities discussed in Chapter I. The needs assessment determines which of these ingredients are already operating and how effective they are, and which are not.

The next step in setting up a school-community relations program is program planning. The data gathered on the existing concerns and associated groups and on aspects of the program which are already operating are extremely valuable for formulating goals and objectives. From this information it is possible to obtain a thorough description of the present status of relations between the school and community.

The Needs Assessment Process

Two types of data must be obtained from the needs assessment. First, existing school-community relations issues and associated groups must be identified. Discrepancies between existing and ideal school-community relations must also be determined. The process of obtaining

these data involves the six steps listed in Figure 2. An explanation of each of these steps follows.

Method of Data Collection

Two methods of data collection are available: open-ended interview or questionnaire. Each technique has advantages and disadvantages to consider before deciding which is more appropriate to your situation.

Advantages of interviews are that they:

1. Provide an opportunity for contact with the community in an informal, positive, noncrisis atmosphere.

2. Permit clarification by the interviewer of unclear responses and comments.

3. Allow the interviewer to observe not only what is said, but also how it is said, thus providing candid data on attitudes and beliefs.

4. Provide a chance for interviewees to comment on any school-related topic, since interview questions are open-ended.

5. Enable data collection to be accomplished through contact with a small proportion of staff and community members.

6. Result in a high degree of willingness to participate in data collection.

7. Permit rapport to develop between the interviewer and interviewee, thus resulting in data that are more likely to be candid and accurate.

8. Provide data by which issues and groups can be linked.

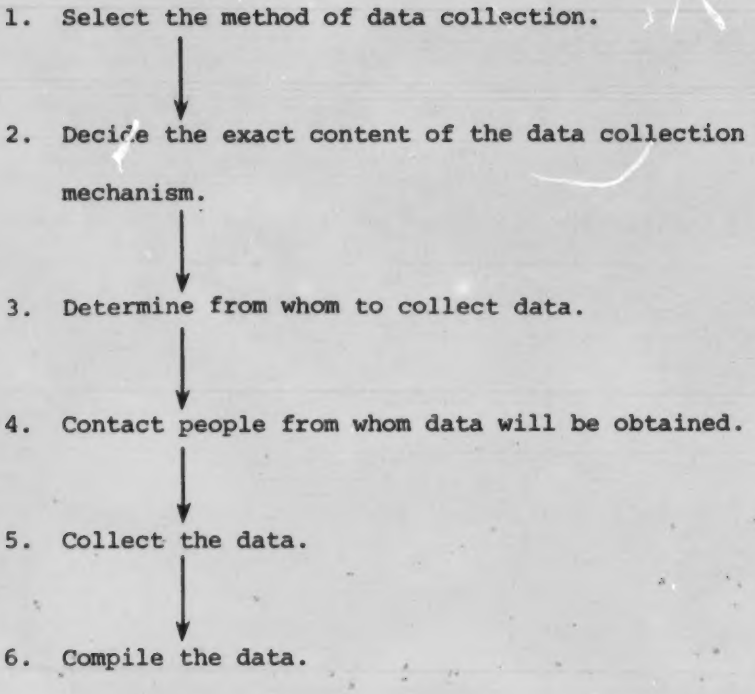

1. Select the method of data collection.
2. Decide the exact content of the data collection mechanism.
3. Determine from whom to collect data.
4. Contact people from whom data will be obtained.
5. Collect the data.
6. Compile the data.

Figure 2. The six-step needs assessment process.

Disadvantages of interviews are that they:

1. Tend to be time-consuming for both interviewee and interviewer.

2. Provide a great deal of diverse data, which makes data compilation complicated.

3. Require time and money for training interviewers to develop rapport, probe unclear responses, obtain maximum data, remain objective, and accurately report the data.

4. Tend to obtain attitudes, feelings, and reactions rather than strictly factual information.

5. Produce findings which may be more subject to public criticism.

Advantages of questionnaires are that they:

1. Require less time to administer than it takes to train interviewers or conduct an interview.

2. Ask questions phrased in exactly the same way for all people.

3. Enable the collected data to be categorized and, therefore, compiled objectively and easily.

4. Require less time to fill out than it would take to participate in an interview.

Disadvantages of questionnaires are that they:

1. Tend not to allow rapport to develop between the person seeking information and the person giving it; therefore, the data may not be candid and accurate.

2. Assumes that the person responding can both read and write.

3. Make it easy for a high percentage of people not to return the questionnaires; those having the strongest reactions to the questions are most likely to respond, which results in a biased sampling.

4. Provide no opportunity for clarifying or justifying responses.

5. Provide no opportunity for responding to school-related topics that are not covered.

6. Provide no opportunity for observing the feelings with which responses are being made.

7. Provide no opportunity to link issues and groups.

If time is available for training interviewers and compiling the data, the interview technique is recommended. This approach results in insights about participants' feelings and attitudes, which permits identification of school-community relations issues and associated groups. Care must be taken that interviewers remain objective throughout the interview process. Obtaining interviewers from outside the school and its community is highly recommended. Outside interviewers will help assure objectivity during the interview and when the data is reported.

Content of Data Collection Mechanisms

Once the method for collecting data has been decided, the exact content of the data collection mechanism must be determined. The data collection mechanism normally begins with an assessment of the existing relations between the school and its community. As mentioned previously, it is important to learn how the school already attempts

to interact with the community, what reaction community and staff members have to these attempts, and what feelings community members have toward the school and its program. Table 1 provides a general outline of the content of data collection mechanisms, whether interviews or questionnaires are used.

Broad, general questions are useful at the beginning of a questionnaire or interview. They often lead to further questions which clarify and add information. Focusing on perceived strengths of the school at the beginning of the interview permits a positive stage to be set for the data collection session. Therefore, the first question may be stated as, "What are the strengths of the school?". The second question frequently asks about the school's weaknesses.

From general school perceptions, the questions proceed to specifics about school-community relations. To determine which of the school-community relations processes (analysis, communication, involvement, participation, and resolution) are used, one question centers on each of them. The questions are generally stated in terms of the opportunities community or staff members have in relation to each of the processes. For example, a staff member might be asked, "In what ways are the problems and issues in the community identified?" (analysis) or "What opportunities do community members have to participate in making decisions about their children or the instructional program of school?" (participation).

When questioning school staff members, data must also be collected on program characteristics of existing school-community relations.

Table 1

Content of the Data Collection Mechanism

Perceptions of existing relations

- Strengths of the school
- Weaknesses of the school

School-community relations processes being used

- How analysis is used
- How communication is used
- How involvement is used
- How participation is used
- How resolution is used

Program characteristics of existing school-community relations

(for staff input only)

- Who is in charge of organizing the activities and program
- Who is in charge of motivating the staff in terms of activities and program
- Who is in charge of implementing the activities and program
- Who is in charge of coordinating the activities and program
- Who is in charge of evaluating the activities and program

Reactions to existing school-community relations activities

- Strengths of each activity
- Weaknesses of each activity

These data are frequently obtained in conjunction with information on responsibilities for school-community relations. The questioning may follow the pattern: "Is a needs assessment of school-community relations conducted? Who organizes it? Who coordinates it? Does goal setting follow completion of the needs assessment? Who organizes the goal setting? Who implements it? Are school-community relations activities selected only after goals have been set in order to meet specific goals? Who coordinates activity selection? Who organizes it?". Generally, questioning about the existing program and who is responsible is eliminated from community data collection, since community members have little knowledge of these aspects.

The final questions are devoted to obtaining reactions to specific school-community relations activities which are currently being used. Typical interview questions are, "What are your feelings about the Christmas sing? What do you like about it? What do you dislike about it?" On a questionnaire, the respondents can be asked to circle a number from 1 to 5 indicating how well they like a particular activity. For example:

How well do you like the present format of parent-teacher conferences?	(Dislike)	1	2	3	4	5	(Like very well)

In summary, it is essential to collect data on general feelings about the school, existing opportunities for the operation of the school-community relations processes, program characteristics and staff responsibilities for existing school-community relations, and reactions to specific activities being used.

Who to Collect Data From

The third step in the needs assessment process is to select people to be interviewed or to complete the questionnaire. No matter which mechanism is used, this selection must be approached systematically. Particular effort should be devoted to obtaining an unbiased, representative sample from the community and school staff.

Four categories of community members must be selected: (a) knowledgeables, or those who have information about the school through frequent contact for either positive or negative reasons, (b) officials, including both school officials (PTA, Citizen Advisory Council, etc.) and government officials (city council members, school board members, etc.) living within the attendance area, (c) randoms, or those selected at random from among all community members through enrollment cards or city directories, and (d) referrals, or those mentioned as being knowledgeable and influential by people in the first three categories. Table 2 provides a guideline of the approximate number of people who should be selected from each category according to the size of the school's student body.

Approximately 25% of the school staff should be interviewed or complete the questionnaire. The principal, school secretary, a representative of each grade level or department, and several representatives of any uncertified staff should be among those selected.

Initiating Contact

Participation in the needs assessment requires time and cooperation from the selected staff and community members. Those selected may be

Table 2

Numbers of Community Members to Select for Data Collection According to Size of School's Student Body

Number of Students	Officials	Knowledgeables	Randoms	Referrals	Total
500	4	9	8	9	30
1,000	6	12	10	12	40
2,500	8	25	22	25	80

unwilling to devote the necessary time and energy unless they are convinced their participation is important. Therefore, it is essential to explain the needs assessment in the local newspaper and to local decision makers (e.g., city council and school board members) as a general means of informing the community about the study.

This publicity needs to be followed by a letter of introduction to the selected participants in the study. The letter should contain a brief explanation of why the study is being conducted, who is conducting the study, why the individual has been selected as a participant, and the importance for the study of obtaining the individual's feelings and perceptions. Reference should also be made to a follow-up telephone call which the selected individual will receive. The letter should be jointly signed by a school official (generally the Superintendent of Schools), the school principal, and any outside consultants who are conducting the study.

The follow-up telephone call provides an opportunity for further explanations and for asking questions about the needs assessment. If an interview is to be conducted, a mutually agreeable time and location can be arranged during the conversation. If a questionnaire is to follow, a brief explanation of the procedure for filling out and returning the questionnaire may be given. The telephone call could be the start of a good rapport between the participants and those conducting the study and should emphasize the importance of participating in the study.

Collecting Data

Once cooperation of selected staff and community members has been obtained, the necessary data can be collected. If interviews are being conducted, the interviewer must keep the agreed-upon appointment and follow the designated interview questions. The interviewer must remain objective and obtain as much information and clarification on the desired topics as possible. Several suggestions for conducting a successful interview are provided in Table 3.

If questionnaires are being used, the questionnaires and an accompanying letter of instructions must be distributed, along with stamped return envelopes. A follow-up postcard or telephone call may be necessary to receive maximum questionnaire return.

Compiling Data

Once the data have been collected, it must be compiled into a meaningful format for reporting on the school's needs in terms of school-community relations. The issues and problems of each individual or group must be compiled; the feelings and sentiments of each individual or group should also be summarized; then the individuals and groups, issues and problems, and feelings and sentiments should all be inter-related. A comparison must be made between the existing and the ideal school-community relations program. Every effort must be made to keep the data anonymous and to make it impossible for anyone to trace a statement to its source. This may necessitate changing names of parents and students.

Several techniques are useful in compiling the data from interviews and questionnaires. Recording each issue and associated comments

Table 3

Suggestions for Conducting a Successful Interview

Do's

1. Promote good public relations with the community by being prompt, organized, and courteous.
2. Explain the interview program thoroughly and answer all questions about the interviewer.
3. Be brief and simple in identifying oneself and one's purpose.
4. Be willing to go into detail, if asked.
5. Be concerned in getting people interested in the needs assessment.
6. Note order of apparently disconnected information.
7. Define concepts well; they become units of observation in the research.
8. Note changes in verbal behavior; the muted cues, the values, the sentiments.
9. Get notations down as soon as possible after the interview.
10. Keep notes as full and complete as possible at the beginning.
11. Keep interpretations out of notes.
12. Analyze the data every night.
13. Put issues into a time perspective, with dates, before and after, etc.
14. Obtain names. The people being interviewed should not use pronouns.
15. Get definitions and examples in order to operationalize issues.
16. Keep issues associated with individuals and groups.

Don'ts

1. React to the opinions and values of the people being interviewed or give your own opinions.
2. Exchange information from an interview with others.
3. Use a tape recorder.

on a particular color of index card enables all comments on the same issue to be drawn together. The same effect may be achieved by recording comments on computer cards and notching them to indicate a particular issue. All cards with the same notched area may then be skewered and drawn together. In cases where a response scale from 1 to 5 was used, the responses may be key punched for easy summarizing. The results may then be hand or computer analyzed.

It is recommended that interview and questionnaire results be compiled in terms of how often an issue or perception was mentioned. Such quantitative results permit an objective summarization of the data. A matrix such as in Figure 3 simplifies the recording of data on existing groups in terms of school-community relations processes being utilized.

The outcome of data compilation is to enable the data to be presented in a comprehensible, meaningful manner. This final report on the needs assessment should make the next step, program planning, easier.

Needs Assessment--A Case Study

The previous explanation of the needs assessment process may be clarified by reporting on an actual needs assessment conducted in an elementary school which served as the basis for a school-community relations program. This example is not meant to be a limiting prescription, but to provide helpful information. The example will be the basis for case studies in upcoming chapters.

Because of the relative advantage of interviews over questionnaires, the former technique was selected. An outside consultant, designated

Interaction Processes

Groups	Analysis	Communication	Involvement	Participation	Resolution
Rotarians					
High School Staff		Systemwide Curriculum Meetings			
Businessmen			Business-Industry-Education Day		
Golden Agers					
Parents				Parent-Teacher Conferences	
Aides					

Figure 3. Matrix for recording data on existing groups in terms of interaction processes being utilized.

as the program coordinator, conducted 37 staff interviews and 37 community interviews over a 3-month period.

The purpose of the staff interviews was to determine the roles and responsibilities of each staff member in the school-community relations activities at the school and to identify their perceptions of the strengths and weaknesses of the school-community relations. The procedure used in conducting the staff interviews involved: (a) discussing the purpose of the interviews with key staff members; (b) contacting each staff member individually to determine if he or she would be willing to be interviewed; (c) setting an interview time; and (d) conducting the interviews. All 58 full- and part-time staff members were approached about their interest in being interviewed; 37 indicated willingness. A copy of the staff interview questions is included in Sample 1.

The program coordinator interviewed 37 parents and nonparents in the school community. The objectives of these interviews were to determine the perceptions of a broad representation of citizens on: (a) the strengths and weaknesses of the school's program, (b) the effective and ineffective aspects of school-community relations at the school, (c) the ways people learn about and become involved in what is happening at the school, and (d) the specific school-community relations activities of the school.

The procedure used in conducting the school-community interviews involved: (a) selecting the interviewees; (b) sending a letter of introduction from the district Director of Elementary Education, the

Sample 1

Staff Interview Schedule

NAME OF RESPONDENT _____

ROLE OF RESPONDENT _____

UNIT/GRADE LEVEL OF RESPONDENT _____

I. Introduction

Who I am -

- name
- refer to meeting at which I was introduced (authorization)
- refer to plans for work at the school next year

Purpose of interview

- general

to identify the roles and responsibilities of the staff in the school's home-school-community relations program

to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the present school-community relations program at the school

- specific

to identify the roles and responsibilities of the principal in the school's school-community relations program

to identify the roles and responsibilities of the unit leaders in the school's school-community relations program

to identify the roles and responsibilities of the unit teachers in the school's school-community relations program

to identify the roles and responsibilities of the aides in the school's school-community relations program

to identify the roles and responsibilities of the special area teachers in the school's school-community relations program

Sample I (continued)

to identify the roles and responsibilities of the pupil services personnel in the school's school-community relations program

- use of the information

basis for my work at the school next year

report may employ quotes to illustrate, but names will not be utilized

II. Biographical

History of respondent as a teacher

- generally

- in the community

- at the school

III. Roles and Responsibilities (open-ended)

As a _____(role), what are your responsibilities in the area of school-community relations at the school in terms of analysis, communication, involvement, participation, and resolution?

IV. Strengths and Weaknesses of the School-Community Relations Program

What are the strengths of the school-community relations program at the school?

What are the weaknesses of the school-community relations program at the school?

V. Checklist (focused questions)

What is your responsibility with the following current school-community relations activities?

Parent-Teacher Conferences

Articles about School in Local Newspaper

Reporting Pupil Progress

Sample I (Continued)

PTA/PTO

Open Houses

Christmas and Spring Music Programs

Volunteer Aide Program

Community Involvement of Staff Members

School Facilities Open to Community

Parent Advisory Board/Council

School Newsletter

Parent Questionnaires or Surveys

Use of Community Resource People for Instruction

Positive Cards, Calls, Notes

Other

principal of the school, and the university professor sponsoring the study (see Sample 2); (c) contacting each family by telephone to determine their willingness to be interviewed; (d) establishing a 1 1/2 hour block of time for the interview; and (e) conducting the interview. A total of 44 people were contacted by letter and telephone to request an interview; 37 agreed to be interviewed. A copy of the interview questions is included in Sample 3.

The 37 community members represented four categories of people: officials, knowledgeables, randoms, and referrals. The officials included three of the four PTA officers at the school (the fourth refused an interview), one school board official whose children had attended the school, one city council official, and the county board member from the school attendance area.

Category two, knowledgeables, included 15 people who were nominated because they were knowledgeable and informed about the school. The procedure followed to nominate these people consisted of asking the principal, school secretary, unit leaders, a knowledgeable resident of the attendance area who was also a school aide, and three PTA officers for names of people they thought were knowledgeable about the school. Often people were named because they had a number of children at the school; had been a PTA officer; called or visited the school frequently with questions, complaints, or problems; or attended PTA meetings regularly. Parents as well as nonparents were nominated. If desired, the nominators could review a list of students to assist them in the selection process. Next, nominations were compiled by frequency, and

Sample 2

Letter of Introduction to Community Members

Dear _____:

A yearlong study of home-school-community relations is being conducted this year at _____ School by the University of Wisconsin-Madison. As part of the study, Mrs. Lynn Karges is interviewing numerous people to determine their opinions of _____'s school-community relations, the operation of the program at _____, and any other school-related matters which they would like to discuss.

You are one of the people who has been selected to be interviewed. We urge your cooperation and hope you will be able to take the time to talk to Mrs. Karges. She will be contacting you soon by telephone to make an appointment at a time and place of convenience to you.

The numerous interviews will be incorporated into a report, which will be made available to everyone who has been interviewed. Be assured that any comments you make during the interview will be kept confidential. The _____ Public Schools, and specifically _____ School, plan to use the findings of the interviews in planning future school-community relations activities.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Sincerely,

_____ _____
Director of Elementary Education
_____ Public Schools

_____ _____
Principal
_____ Elementary School

Marvin J. Fruth, Professor
University of Wisconsin-Madison

LL/HMJ/MJF/jjd

Sample 3

School-Community Interview Schedule

Name of Respondent(s) _____

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

I. Introduction

Who are you (interviewer)?

+Name

+Reference to letter of introduction and local school

+Reference to study affiliation

+Indicate that you are the only interviewer

Purpose of the Study

+General purpose of the study

+Discuss the positive aspects and high points of the education provided at the school

+Discuss the school-community relations at the school

+Specific purpose of the study

+Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the educational program at the school

+Identify the strengths and weaknesses of school-community relations at the school

Authorization

+Refer to authorization of district and principal

+Refer to letter of introduction

+Refer to study affiliation and to whom I am responsible for these interviews

Sample 3 (Continued)

Use of the Information

+Report to the Superintendent, Director of Elementary Education, and principal

+Use of names and/or quotations

+Interview is part of a larger study involving 40 interviews

+None will be identified by name or directly associated with quotations

+Study may employ quotations to illustrate its observations, findings, or conclusions but names or direct associations will not be utilized

Why are we interviewing you--how we got your name

+List of PTA officers (President, Vice Presidents, Historian, Council Representatives, Secretary, Treasurer) from 1975-76 and 1976-77

+List of persons who are knowledgeable and informed about the school

+List of parents selected at random from an index of school families to get broad representation

+List developed from interviews of persons who have been nominated as knowledgeable and informed by others who have been interviewed

II. Biographical

Educational History of Respondent

+School history of respondent

+Specific history of respondent in the school area

+Differences noted

Children

+Confirm names, grades, ages of children

+School history of each child

+Specific history of each child at the school

Sample 3 (Continued)

+Differences among children and places of school attendance

+Experience of children at the school

III. Central--Open-Ended Questions of the Community Study

What are some of the strengths of the school? Weaknesses? Points of excellence? Places for improvements? Problems, concerns, issues?

+Allow respondent to establish agenda--not interviewer

+Note language of the system

+Have respondent operationalize the responses

+Definitions ("What do you mean by . . .?")

+Examples ("Could you give me an example of what you mean by . . .?")

+Differences ("How does _____ differ from what you experienced in another school or place?")

+Changes (specific dates) (Is it different before or after a certain event?)

+Is . . . should ("Now, what do you think it should be like?")

+Quotations

+Places

+Names ("Who are some others who would be knowledgeable or informed about _____?" or "What do you mean by 'they'?")

What are some of the ways in which you learn about what is happening at the school?

What opportunities do you have to become involved in what is happening at the school?

What opportunities do you have to participate in decision making at the school?

What are some of the effective aspects of school-community relations at the school? Ineffective?

Sample 3 (Continued)

IV. Checklist--Focused Questions

What is your opinion of the following current home-school-community relations activities?

+Christmas and spring sings

+PTA programs, such as the September Open House and the square dance

+Newsletters (classroom, unit, school)

+Report cards

+Conferences

+Parent Advisory Council for Title I

+Parent volunteer program

+Parent questionnaires/surveys

+Positive calls and notes, commendation forms

+Open door policy

+Curriculum goals and expectations

+Individually Guided Education/Multiunit School Organization

Do the hours you are employed conflict with the times at which the activities at the school are held?

V. Referrals

Who are some other knowledgeable and informed persons who would be willing to assist in this study and perhaps be interviewed?

Would you be willing to serve as a reference for me to that person by either calling or allowing me to use your name on introduction?

VI. Come-back or telephone contact for additional data needs or for information and clarification

VII. Follow-up letter of thanks

those mentioned most frequently were selected.

A third category consisted of randomly selected families. Using a file of families at the school, the interviewer randomly selected cards until there was at least one family representing each grade level. Seven families were selected in the random category.

The final group included people referred during other interviews. During the interviews, the interviewer asked for suggestions of people who would be knowledgeable about the school. Those names which were mentioned most frequently were selected. Six parents and three nonparents were in this category.

The interview data were summarized using the color coding system described earlier. The comments from each interview related to one topic were recorded on a particular color of index card. Similarly colored index cards were drawn together and the frequency of comment on each issue noted, as shown in Sample 4. For questions related to specific school-community relations activities, a general summary of responses was made without recording frequency (see Sample 5).

The data were further analyzed according to the extent of use and the focus of the interaction processes. A matrix was used for this purpose, as shown in Sample 6. Responsibilities of school staff members in terms of school-community relations were recorded and analyzed for the type of interaction process(es) involved (see Sample 7 for a partial list of teacher-perceived responsibilities). These formats for reporting needs assessment data were helpful for the next step, program planning.

Sample 4

Strengths of the School

Strength	No. of Families Mentioning
Teachers' concern, accessibility, enthusiasm, and friendliness toward students and parents	19
The principal's friendliness, accessibility, and sensitivity to the students and parents	19
Students' opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities	12
The strong educational program at the school	11
The special educational programs at the school	8
Men on the staff	4
Students switching teachers	4
The strict discipline at the school	4
The helpful, well-qualified noncertified staff	4
Proximity of the school to the homes	3
PTA	3

Sample 5

Summary of Responses to Checklist Questions

A. Christmas Sing

1. General support and desire to continue it in the future
2. Concerns
   a. Crowded
   b. Spread over two days
   c. Includes teacher performances
   d. Bad location
   e. Difficult to hear

B. Spring Sing

1. General support and desire to have an annual spring sing
2. Concern
   a. Too hot

C. PTA

1. General concern and desire to change PTA in the future
   a. Poor attendance unless children present
   b. Content of meetings
   c. National affiliation uses local funds
   d. Money-making function of PTA is inappropriate
   e. Not all classes make presentations
   f. Same clique always involved
   g. Difficult to hear
2. Limited support for social issues orientation

Sample 6

Summary of Interaction Processes Utilization

School-Community Groups	Interaction Processes				
	Analysis	Communication	Involvement	Participation	Resolution
Parents		1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.	6, 7.	2, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17. 18.	2, 4, 8, 9, 15, 16, 17, 18.
Nonparents		5, 10, 11, 13, 14.			

KEY:

1 = written notices and classroom newsletters
2 = parent-teacher conferences
3 = report cards
4 = visiting school
5 = student performances at PTA
6 = volunteering in the classroom
7 = being a room mother
8 = calls by or to the principal
9 = calls by or to teachers
10 = students
11 = other adults
12 = PTA announcements and newsletter
13 = radio announcements
14 = newspaper announcements
15 = parent-teacher conference on a student
16 = parent-principal conference on a student or a teacher
17 = parent-Superintendent conference on a teacher
18 = parent-Board of Education conference on a teacher

Sample 7

Teacher Responsibilities in School-Community Relations

Activity	Analysis	Communication		Involvement of Parents' Resources	Participation in Decision Making	Resolution
		One-way	Two-way			
1. Participate in parent-teacher conferences		1	2		2	
2. Attend PTA meetings		1	2			
3. Complete report cards		1				
4. Explain report card markings		1	2			
5. Prepare Christmas sing presentation		1				
6. Arrange for field trip chaperones		1		1		
7. Clarify any apparent problems through a call to the home			1		2	1
8. Work with room mothers and homes for treats, special help		1		1		
9. Work with volunteer mothers at school and/or home		1		1		

1 = frequently or always utilized this process

2 = infrequently utilized this process

CHAPTER III

PROGRAM PLANNING

Once the relations between the school and its community have been assessed and there are identified school-community relations needs, the staff should then begin planning the ideal school-community relations program. The identified needs must be incorporated into goal statements and serve as the basis for selecting school-community relations activities in the future.

This chapter provides information on planning a school-community relations program. The first section discusses the five goals of the planning process. These include: (a) translating identified needs into school-community relations goals; (b) establishing priorities for the school among the goals; (c) selecting the specific activities which will help meet the goals; (d) establishing timelines, responsibilities, and essential resources for implementing the activities; and (e) selecting evaluation procedures for the activities and goals. The chapter continues with an explanation of procedures for meeting these five goals. The concluding section is a continuation of the case study introduced in Chapter II. The process used in one school for restating the needs as goals and selecting activities for meeting the goals is discussed.

Goals of the Planning Process

The needs assessment provides the school with a great deal of data on the present status of school-community relations and the necessary

areas of growth in order to implement an ideal school-community relations program. Much of the information may be negatively oriented because it emphasizes school problems. Rather than dwelling on negative aspects, the first goal of the planning phase is to help the staff translate the problems and issues into positive goal statements.

There are at least three sources of information for formulating goal statements. First, each identified weakness can be examined to see whether it is truly a weakness which must be eliminated or whether it is a misperception which can be corrected. Goal statements may also develop from expressed concerns about present school-community relations activities. Concerns must be viewed from the standpoint of how they can be eliminated. A third source of information for formulating goals is to compare existing school-community relations with the ideal program. Any unused processes, programmatic elements, or responsibilities should be translated into goals for future growth; unnecessary aspects should be translated into goals for future elimination.

As a result of viewing the needs assessment data from these three perspectives, numerous goals will undoubtedly be generated. In fact, the number of goals is generally far too extensive for a school to even consider accomplishing in a single year. A second essential step of the planning process is, therefore, to establish priorities. Consideration must be given to how all available resources may be most effectively used in the future. Realistic timelines must be established for effectively meeting the goals.

After goals and timelines have been established, activities can be selected to help meet the goals. This sequence eliminates the common tendency to adopt activities without thinking about whether they are really appropriate for a given school. Activities should be selected because they help meet the established goals and make effective use of available resources, not because they are currently popular.

Once activities have been selected, consideration must be given to establishing timelines, staff responsibilities, and essential resources for implementing each activity. Methods of evaluating each activity's effectiveness must also be determined. This permits incorporating effective activities and eliminating ineffective ones during future planning.

The final goal of the planning phase should be establishing procedures for evaluating the school's progress toward meeting the specified goals. By assessing the perceptions of staff and community members, the school can evaluate its current status and apply the findings to future planning.

These are the five goals involved in the planning phase of establishing a school-community relations program. The next section of this chapter provides suggestions on how each of these goals may be met.

The Planning Process

After the school's needs have been assessed and the data compiled, the results must be shared with staff members and all community

members who participated in the needs assessment. Getting concerns out into the open and dealing with them promptly eliminates the growth of unnecessary tension and mistrust between the school and community. Everyone focuses quickly on improving the present situation before further problems develop.

We recommend that the results of the needs assessment be shared with the entire staff. This procedure prevents misinformation and problems which could occur if only selected staff hear this information. The most effective and efficient means for sharing the data is to hold a staff meeting and distribute written copies of the interaction matrix and the frequency tabulations of concerns illustrated in Chapter II. These constitute the most essential data, which can be studied and used as the basis for future planning. The staff would also benefit from hearing anonymous quotations from interviews to further explain and illustrate the data regarding concerns and interaction patterns.

The individual(s) who coordinated the needs assessment should be responsible for sharing the data with the school staff. Having an outsider conduct and report on the needs assessment is a distinct advantage because it is easier for an outsider than for a staff member to be objective. If this is not possible, then the staff member who has coordinated the needs assessment, likely the principal, must present the results as objectively as possible. No source should ever be associated with a statement; all information must remain anonymous.

In reporting the data to community members, several formats may

be used. Copies of the interaction matrix and the frequency tabulations may be mailed to the participants, with a cover letter explaining data sources and how the data may be interpreted. Or a meeting, similar to the staff meeting, may be held. Again, anonymous quotations from interviews may be shared, but at no time should the source(s) be revealed.

Translating Needs into Goals

The needs assessment data may seem discouraging because of the multitude of problems which exist. Thinking of the identified needs as potential growth areas, instead of problem areas, helps. Translating the needs into goal statements encourages a more positive perspective on the assessment data and provides a good opportunity to check whether the staff thoroughly understands the needs.

A staff meeting should be held for the purpose of generating goal statements. Again, total participation will permit closer identification with and commitment to the goals which are written. Although the meeting may be quite long, it permits the staff to leave with a positive orientation. The staff meeting may be held in conjunction with a meeting for sharing needs assessment data or one for setting priorities. Or, a separate total staff meeting, strictly for the purpose of translating needs into goals, may be held.

The school principal will undoubtedly be one of the coordinators of the translation effort. He or she is in the best position to know the amount and type of inservice which the staff will require for writing the goal statements. The principal is also most knowledgeable

about effective ways of dividing the staff into working-size groups. For example, the principal is most aware if grade-level teachers or an entire department would be the most logical group for working on several specific needs. On the other hand, the total staff might best work together on all of the needs.

Any outsiders involved in the needs assessment should also be involved in the staff meeting. They help clarify assessment results and provide an objective judgment about whether the goal statements are actually directed at the expressed needs. Outside resource people could circulate among the group, answering questions and making the translation process easier.

A worksheet can be provided at the staff meeting for recording goal statements (see Table 4). On the left side of the sheet, any identified issues, concerns, and discrepancies should be printed; the right side provides adequate space for recording related goal statement(s). To provide a goal statement, staff members must ask what the real problem or issue is and what can realistically be done to correct the situation. Several examples of this translation are provided.

As a result of this meeting, the staff should have a good idea of the many directions which are possible for meeting the needs. The next step in the process is to establish priorities for accomplishing the many possible goals.

Establishing Priorities among the Goals

The process of establishing priorities among the goals involves two considerations. First, each goal statement must be examined to

Table 4

Staff Worksheet

Identified issues, concerns, and discrepancies	Goal statement
1. Few opportunities for parents to become knowledgeable about the instructional program of their children.	1. To provide more opportunities for parents to become knowledgeable about the instructional program of their children.
2. Not letting the students use the front doors of the school.	2. To explain the reason for not using the front doors of the school and provide data on the improvements which have resulted from not using the doors.

determine its urgency. A goal's urgency can normally be judged by the frequency with which the related problem was mentioned and the emotion that was displayed in the interviews or on the questionnaires about the problem. Second, the goal statements must be attainable. Some goals require resources which are easily and quickly attained, thereby permitting their accomplishment within a short time period. These goals should be high priority during the next 1-year period. Other goals require resources which are not immediately available and, therefore, cannot be attempted for awhile. They can be considered for future years.

Establishing priorities will best be accomplished jointly by those who conducted the needs assessment and the key decision makers in the school. The needs assessors can be objective about the greatest areas of concern, basing their statements on the interviews and questionnaires. The key decision makers are most familiar with the availability of necessary resources.

A worksheet, such as that shown in Table 5, can serve as a guide to the essential considerations in establishing priorities. The sheet is designed to force the staff to consider the extent of feeling about each problem registered during the needs assessment. It also requires the decision makers to examine whether unusual amounts of time, personnel, money, or consumable materials will be necessary to accomplish the goal, and whether these unusual demands can be met. Based on all of this information, the decision makers will be able to number the goals from highest to lowest priority.

Table 5

Goal Prioritizing Worksheet

Goal statement	Urgency of problem (Not urgent 1 2 3 4 5 Urgent)	Resources required (Any unusual amounts of time, personnel, money, consumable materials?)	Resource availability (Unavailable 1 2 3 4 5 Available)	Priority of goal
To provide more opportunities for parents to become knowledgeable about the instructional program of their children.	5	1. time 2. personnel	3 3	
To explain the reason for not using the front doors of the school, and provide data on the improvements which have resulted from not using the doors.	5	none		

Selecting an Approach to High-priority Goals

Once priorities have been set, a decision must be made about an approach to use in meeting the high-priority goals. One possible approach is to have the entire school focus on several top-priority goals. The staff would implement a wide variety of activities directed at attaining these goals. Various subunits of the staff, such as departments or grade levels, would select activities appropriate to them, but still directed at attaining the selected school-wide goals Implementing a variety of solutions to each school goal promotes a school-wide feeling of responsibility for working toward a common goal. This approach also provides an opportunity to determine which activities are most successful in meeting each goal.

A second possible approach is to have each subunit within the staff select its own goal to work toward. Each subunit would select activities appropriate to the goal. Although this approach does not permit a feeling of togetherness to develop or allow a comparison of solutions, it does encourage more rapid problem solving. The number of goals worked on is directly related to the number of staff units.

The decision about which approaches to select should be a total staff decision. A discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of each approach should take place at a staff meeting. The staff should then select the approach with which they feel most comfortable.

Selecting Activities

The staff is now ready to review the wide variety of activities available for meeting the selected goals. Each activity must be

viewed in terms of its appropriateness for meeting the goals. Consideration must also be given to whether such resources as personnel, time, and money, essential for implementing the activity, are available. From among the activities which are both appropriate and realistic, the staff may select the ones which are most interesting to them.

Activity review and selection may be accomplished at a total staff meeting or at subunit staff meetings depending on which approach was selected. The school principal will coordinate a total staff meeting; a staff member will need to be designated to head each subunit meeting.

A partial listing of some activities which may be considered is presented in Table 6. Also included in Table 6 is an analysis of the school-community relations processes which each activity incorporates. The list illustrates that each activity may incorporate several school-community relations processes and that a number of different activities may involve the same process. This list should be approached by asking the following questions of each activity:

1. Does the activity help meet their school-community relations goals?

2. What specific resources are required to implement the activity?

3. Are the required resources available in their particular situation?

Planning the Activities

The final phase of the planning process involves making specific

Table 6

Activities for Meeting School-Community Relations Goals

School-Community Relations Activity	Processes involved*					Goal for which the activity is appropriate	Specific resources needed to implement the activity	Resource Availability
	A	C	I	P	R			
Question-answer coffees	X	X			X			
Parent-teacher conferences	X	X		X	X			
Positive/negative calls		X			X			
Special programs		X	X					
Instructional game Make-&-Take		X	X					
Commendation forms		X			X			
Visits to school		X	X					
School newsletter		X						
Classroom newsletters		X						
Room mothers		X	X					
PTO/PTA		X	X	X	X			
Advisory council	X	X	X	X	X			
Report cards		X						

Continued

Table 6 (Continued)

Activities for Meeting School-Community Relations Goals

School-Community Relations Activity	Processes involved*					Goal for which the activity is appropriate	Specific resources needed to implement the activity	Resource Availability
	A	C	I	P	R			
Home visits	X	X		X	X			
Volunteers:								
parents								
retirees		X	X					
grandparents								
Adopted grandparents		X	X					
Community education workshops	X	X	X	X	X			
Newspaper articles		X						

*A=Analysis, C=Communication, I=Involvement, P=Participation, and R=Resolution

plans for implementing the selected activities. Among the areas to consider are setting timelines, specifying staff responsibilities, determining the sources of essential resources, and selecting means for evaluating the activities and progress toward the goals.

It is important for the staff to designate when each of the selected activities will take place. This helps avoid scheduling a number of activities at one particular time and few activities during the rest of the year. Designating timelines will also prevent numerous demands for the available resources at one time. A third advantage of deciding when each activity will take place is that it encourages long-range activity planning. With plenty of forewarning, the staff will have an opportunity to think and plan before the activities are implemented.

Consideration must also be given to what each staff member's responsibilities are. One staff member must be designated to organize and coordinate each activity, although a number of people will be involved in implementing the plans. Early specification of responsibilities will allow sufficient time for planning so timelines can be met. Specifying responsibilities also helps assure that the activities make maximum use of available resources.

Frequently additional personnel, an unusual amount of time, or extra supply money will be needed in order to implement activities. These unusual demands for resources must be anticipated, planned for, and obtained. The sooner such planning occurs, the more likely the necessary resources will be obtained and the more successful implementation

of the activities will be.

Finally, consideration must be given to evaluating the selected activities and the extent of their contribution to the school's progress in meeting its goals. Data must be obtained on community member's reactions to each implemented activity and on their perceptions of how effective it was in helping to meet the goals. The evaluation format must be decided (e.g., questionnaire, reactions expressed to the staff, informal interviews), and a sample from community members involved in the activity selected for completing the evaluation. A longer range project must be to evaluate all of the year's activities and their effectiveness in meeting the school's goals. Again, decisions must be made about format and sampling techniques.

Therefore, at the conclusion of the planning phase of the school-community relations program, priorities for goals based upon the needs assessment data will have been stated by the staff, and appropriate activities for meeting the high-priority goals will have been selected and planned. Proper planning will ease the transition into program implementation.

The Planning Process - A Case Study

Chapter II described a needs assessment which was actually conducted as the initial step to implementing a school-community relations program. The needs assessment findings will now be discussed further, in terms of the planning process in that particular school.

Needs assessment data indicated the existence of 10 basic school-

community relations problems. These included: (a) a lack of sufficient two-way communication with parents, particularly regarding the instructional program; (b) little community involvement at the school; (c) a lack of adequate notification of parents about upcoming school events; (d) an ineffective, poorly attended PTA; (e) a lack of short- or long-range planning of school-community relations activities; (f) a dislike of the existing report card; (g) a few unconcerned, uncooperative teachers in the school; (h) an unsatisfactory lunchroom and hot lunch program; (i) unacceptable playground supervision and conditions for playing outside; and (j) a lack of understanding of the current curriculum.

The results of the needs assessment were shared with the school staff at a total staff meeting. The program coordinator presented the results in terms of the frequency with which strengths and weaknesses were mentioned. Anonymous quotations to illustrate each category were given. Each staff member received a copy of the complete needs assessment report at the meeting. Time was also devoted to translating the problems into goal statements and establishing high-priority goals using forms similar to those shown in Tables 4 and 5. The meeting concluded with the suggestion that the staff begin considering which goals they would like to work toward attaining.

The community members who had been involved in the needs assessment were also sent their own personal copy of the needs assessment report. The report was accompanied by a cover letter reminding them of the procedure used to obtain the data (see Sample 8).

Sample 8

Letter Accompanying Needs Assessment Report to Community Members

December 7, 1976

Dear _____:

The interviews are finally completed! You'll find the results attached.

I'd like to re-emphasize four points about the interviews and the report. First, the comments which you specifically made have and will remain confidential. What you said to me is strictly between us.

Second, I did change specific names in any quotes I used. This, again, is an effort to assure that what you said remains confidential.

You will find that the number of quotes does not always match up with the number under "No. times mentioned." If several people made the same comment, I reported that comment only once. On the other hand, if a person made several very different comments on the same topic, I reported all of them.

Finally, the "Specific Questions" may not all have been specifically asked of you. If we had already discussed the topic earlier in the interview, I did not reask the question. In a very few cases, where the interview lasted longer than planned, I was not able to complete my list of questions.

Once again, many thanks for the time you spent with me. The opinions you provided will be very valuable as we try to incorporate your suggestions into future planning in the _____ school system. If you have any questions, I encourage you to call me.

Happy Holidays!

Sincerely,

At a later meeting, the key decision makers in the school discussed the selection of an approach to meeting the high-priority goals. One possible approach was to have the entire school concentrate on a single high-priority goal and have each subunit implement at least one activity directed at meeting the goal. The other possibility was to have the staff select five high-priority goals, one for each subunit to work toward attaining. After discussing these possibilities with the other staff members, the staff decided to use the first approach. The selected school-wide focus was to improve pupil progress reporting by using more analysis, two-way communication, participation, and resolution.

The program coordinator worked with each subunit to review the activities appropriate for the school-wide goal and to select an activity or activities which the subunit was interested in implementing.

The first suggested activity for improving pupil progress reporting was using a preconference inventory as the basis for planning parent-teacher conferences. The inventory would cover three areas: (a) the teacher(s) whom the parents wanted present during the conference, (b) the topics they wanted discussed, and (c) the date and time they preferred for their conference. The program coordinator explained that the inventory would provide opportunities for additional analysis, two-way communication, participation, and resolution to take place. Parents would be able to specify their school-related problems and concerns. These concerns would become the basis for two-way communication and parental participation in decision making during the conference.

A second area of concentration was to communicate with parents throughout the marking period, rather than only at the end of the nine weeks. The communication could involve telephone calls regarding positive or negative student behavior; notes sent home with the student regarding his or her work or behavior; parent-teacher conferences scheduled throughout the nine weeks, rather than at designated conference times; and students' papers sent home on a weekly basis with a sheet requesting parent reaction to the work. The purpose for suggesting these techniques was to increase the amount of communication between the home and school, and thereby, to resolve actual and potential conflict. Lack of communication throughout the marking period was an issue in the community. Regular communication with the home was suggested as a means of resolving the conflict.

The program coordinator also suggested that the staff consider using achievement level graphs or reports during conferences. Many citizens who were interviewed had indicated their discontent with the existing report cards because they did not report how the student compared with his or her classmates. Communicating the additional information during conferences would help resolve this conflict.

Another proposal was having the coordinator work with the subunits in improving their conference techniques. Many teachers admitted they felt uncomfortable during parent-teacher conferences and would appreciate an inservice on techniques they might utilize. The objective of the inservice would be to develop understanding and skill in using more two-way communication, participation, and resolution in

parent-teacher conferences.

A fifth suggestion was to have more than the homeroom teacher present during a parent-teacher conference. Because students switch teachers for various subjects, the homeroom teacher could not report on all aspects of the student's growth. The coordinator suggested having one or two additional teachers present at a conference to provide an opportunity for two-way communication about several areas of study.

The final proposal resulted from the lack of systematic analysis of the community by the school. The program coordinator suggested that subunits evaluate parents' perceptions about current conference procedures. A survey would provide information about existing issues related to parent-teacher conferences. Efforts to resolve the issues could then take place.

Within a short time period each subunit had selected activities for meeting the goal of improving pupil progress reporting. Their selections are reported in Sample 9.

An interesting effect of focusing on possible goals and selecting activities was that individual staff members expressed an interest in meeting other goals and trying new activities on their own. The coordinator worked with these individuals to provide them with ideas, sample materials, and skills which they might incorporate. Interest centered upon the goals of improving two-way communication with parents, expanding the effectiveness of the PTA, and increasing parental involvement at the school. Activities selected by individuals for meeting these goals were implementing question-and-answer coffees,

Sample 9

Subunit Activities for Improving the Reporting of Pupil Progress

Subunit	Activities
A	Communication throughout the marking period Use commendation forms when students meet established goals Make positive and negative telephone calls home
B	Communication throughout the marking period Use commendation forms when students meet established goals Make positive and negative telephone calls home
C	Parent-teacher conferences Use preconference inventory Lengthen time for each conference Provide an opportunity for parents to meet with more than one teacher Share information on how the student compares with classmates, if desired (standardized test scores, achievement level) Evaluate new conference format
D	Parent-teacher conferences Use preconference inventory; two teachers to send it home prior to the conference, three teachers to have it filled out at the beginning of the conference
E	Parent-teacher conferences Use preconference inventory Provide an opportunity for parents to meet with more than one teacher Share information on how the student compares with classmates, if desired (standardized test scores, achievement level)

instructional game make-and-takes, class newsletters, a school newsletter, home visits by teachers, student presentations at PTA meetings, and community surveys on upcoming issues for guidance in future decision making.

The program coordinator made an effort to hold frequent meetings with the key decision makers to share the plans and progress of each subunit. It was hoped that this approach would improve communication within the building and encourage enthusiasm for meeting the goal of improving pupil progress reporting. These meetings did serve their purpose; key decision makers returned to their subunits and reported on the various activities being planned.

Each subunit, in the final stage of the planning phase, designated timelines, responsibilities, resources, and made evaluation plans for each of their activities. The program coordinator helped space out timelines and staggered the demand for scarce resources throughout the year. The coordinator also provided suggestions for effective evaluation methods and for sources of unusual resources.

Within a 2-month period, the plans had been completed and numerous activities planned for improving pupil progress reporting. Responsibilities and timelines had been designated; sources of unusual resources had been located; evaluation methods had been determined. The school was ready and anxious to begin implementing its plans.

CHAPTER IV

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Once the school-community relations goals and activities have been selected and planning has been completed, implementation must begin. Implementation is a continuation of the planning phase; an opportunity to act on the plans which have been made. As new and improved activities are implemented, the community has its first glimpse of the school staff's efforts to improve the unsatisfactory and expand the satisfactory aspects of school-community relations.

The first section of this chapter discusses the goal of implementation: to implement the plans made for establishing a school-community relations program. Section two describes the implementation process, which includes acquiring essential resources, meeting specified timelines, following designated responsibilities, and evaluating the plans. The chapter concludes with a description of how one elementary school implemented its plans for a school-community relations program.

The Goal of the Implementation Process

The goal of the implementation phase of establishing a school-community relations program is to put the plans into action. The designated timelines, responsibilities, resource needs, and evaluation techniques provide the staff with step-by-step guidance for the implementation process.

A few plans will undoubtedly need to be revised as implementation progresses. For example, adequate time may not have been allowed for

accomplishing each step of an activity. The designated people may not be able to fulfill all of their responsibilities or some essential resources may not have been anticipated. Further development of an activity may take place as its success becomes evident or as the staff gains experience in implementing the activity.

The Implementation Process

The following are the four major parts of the implementation process; all four must be accomplished simultaneously: (a) acquiring essential resources, (b) meeting specified timelines, (c) fulfilling designated responsibilities, and (d) evaluating plans and activities as they are being implemented.

Acquiring Additional Essential Resources

The implementation phase signals the beginning of the process of acquiring additional resources. One essential resource which may be necessary is extra personnel. These personnel may have to be hired. Perhaps additional needs can be fulfilled through voluntary help. A third possibility is to modify the normal responsibilities of the regular staff so they have additional time to devote to new activities.

Any arrangements for acquiring additional personnel will need to be coordinated by the school principal or school-community relations coordinator. They have a school-wide perspective which is necessary to coordinate the selection of extra personnel or to make switches of personnel within the building. A grade-level or subunit leader may initiate the contact and be involved in actually selecting additional

personnel, but cannot act in isolation from the rest of the staff.

A second resource which may need to be acquired during implementation is additional materials. The materials may be purchased, donated by individuals or local industries, or made by volunteers or staff members. No matter which of these ways has been selected for acquiring materials, the process of obtaining them begins with implementation.

Once again the principal or program coordinator are the most likely candidates for coordinating the school-wide acquisition of necessary materials. From their perspective, it is possible to consolidate purchasing, locate sources for donations, and make sure that no individual is overburdened with requests for time or talent.

The demand for additional personnel and materials may necessitate the acquisition of additional funds. Thought should have been given, during the planning phase, to acquiring these funds. Now it is essential to actually begin obtaining the money either within the school (by reallocating budget money, asking members of the parent-teacher organization, using petty cash, etc.) or through outside sources. These may involve local businesses, the school district office, individual contributions, etc. Again, the fund-seeking effort must be coordinated by someone with a school-wide perspective, i.e., the principal or program coordinator.

Meeting Specified Timelines

In planning the various school-community relations activities, an attempt has been made to designate realistic timelines which were

evenly distributed. Consideration has been given to the amount of time needed to acquire the essential resources and actually implement the necessary sequence of events.

Each activity will take place at the designated time only if each step in its implementation has met the specified timeline and each staff member has fulfilled his or her responsibilities. Otherwise, steps may be skipped or the final deadline changed. Either of these possibilities will be detrimental to the activity, and the total program.

A staff member within each subunit must coordinate the implementation of activities undertaken by the subunit. This person must remind others of their responsibilities and timelines when necessary. One staff member at the building level (the principal or program coordinator) must make sure that all the activities are progressing as planned.

Fulfilling the Designated Responsibilities

As mentioned in Chapter I, responsibilities include organizing, motivating, implementing, coordinating, and evaluating each activity. In addition staff members must assume these same responsibilities for the entire school-community relations program.

Responsibilities for individual activities, as well as the total program, should have been designated during the planning phase. By the time a school enters the implementation phase, the staff members' major concern should be fulfilling the designated responsibilities. Eventually, as various activities are implemented, evaluation results may show the necessity of revising plans. If an activity is expanded, additional responsibilities will need to be assumed; if an activity is

modified, new responsibilities will need to be designated. Such revision should be minimal if proper prior planning has occurred.

Evaluating Plans and Activities

Evaluation techniques and responsibilities should have been determined during the planning phase. As activities are being implemented, the major effort should be devoted to using the designated evaluation techniques and fulfilling the specified evaluation responsibilities. The only exception should be when future plans and activities must be revised based on the evaluation of ongoing plans and activities. Eliminating ineffective aspects of ongoing plans and activities and continuing effective aspects may necessitate some revision of planned evaluation techniques and responsibilities. Such revision should, however, be kept to a minimum to avoid involving the staff in a continual process of planning and replanning.

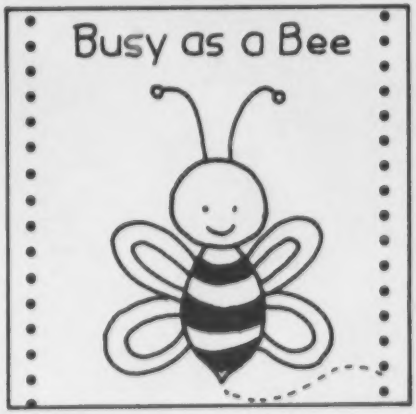
Program Implementation - A Case Study

A description of the needs assessment and program planning phases of establishing a school-community relations program in an actual school setting was included in Chapters II and III. The implementation process used in this school is described in the following pages.

Early in the implementation process, a key decision maker from each school subunit reported on the progress in implementing plans. Teachers in subunits A and B had begun reinforcing students with the commendation forms shown in Samples 10, 11, and 12. These forms were given as rewards when the student had learned to spell his or her address,

Sample 10

GOOD WORK TICKETS



Addition Ant Award

Awarded to

_____

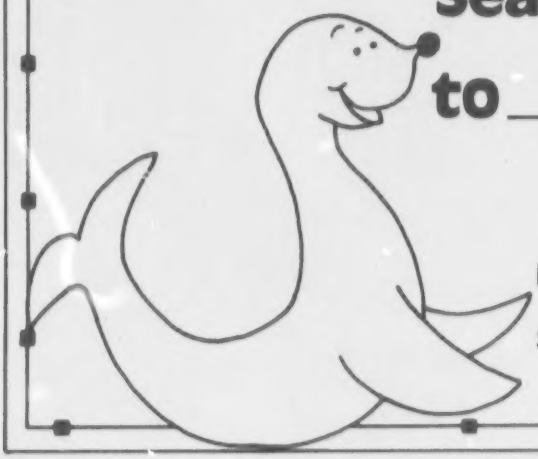
For Learning Addition

Combinations

Date _____

Signed _____

Super Subtraction Seal is Awarded to _____



Date _____

Signed _____

Busy as a Bee

This award is
presented to

_____

For _____

Signed _____

Date _____

the days of the week, and the months of the year. Two teachers had also made positive and negative telephone calls to the homes to report on student behavior and academic progress.

Subunit C had sent preconference inventories (see Sample 13) to the parents and had used the responses to establish conference agendas. Agendas had then been sent to parents (see Sample 14). The leader in subunit C had obtained the approval of the Director of Elementary Education to have an extra 1/2 day for conferences, making it possible to hold 30-minute conferences. The subunit C leader reported that their aide was completing graphs of standardized test scores to share with interested parents. One teacher in the subunit had completed a conference evaluation questionnaire, as shown in Sample 15.

The subunit D representative reported that their survey instrument (see Sample 16) was complete and would be distributed at the upcoming parent-teacher conferences.

Subunit E had made progress in preparing for their potluck. The subunit E staff had completed a letter to the parents to inform them of the upcoming potluck (see Sample 17). The subunit had also begun to prepare the program. Pictures from a recent overnight field trip taken by the sixth graders were being made into slides; the students were preparing a tape recorded narrative to accompany the slides. Other students were involved in writing and practicing a play on ancient civilizations and the Middle Ages, which would be presented after the slide show. Still others were making craft items to be sold at the end of the program. The staff of subunit E had also completed a potluck evaluation form (see Sample 18).

Sample 13

Preconference Inventory

March 7, 1977

Dear _____,

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled in Unit C for Tuesday, March 29th and Wednesday morning, March 30th. We ask you to join with us to plan for a meaningful and informative conference for _____. There will be time set aside for you to visit one or more of your child's teachers to discuss any concern you may have about his/her day at school.

Please complete the bottom portion and return as soon as possible. We shall return a confirmation of your conference.

Sincerely,
Unit C Staff

Please check two or three of the following areas or teachers with whom you especially want to confer:

	(Teacher)		(Teacher)
___ Reading	_____	___ Social Studies	_____
___ Math	_____	___ Science	_____
___ Spelling	_____	___ Art, Music, Phy. Ed.	_____
___ Language	_____	___ Citizenship	_____
___ Penmanship	_____	___ Work & Study Habits	_____

___ Your child's achievement scores

___ Your child's ability compared to his/her grade level

___ Other (Please explain) _____

_____

To help plan your conference, please indicate a day, morning, or afternoon and approximate time that would be best for you.

___ Tuesday, March 29th, ___A.M. ___ P.M. _____ time (8am-5pm)

___ Wednesday, March 30th, ___A.M. only _____ time (8-11:30am)

Parent's Signature _____

Child's Name _____

Sample 13 (Continued)

March 7, 1977

Dear Parents,

The following is a list of classes and teachers that your child meets with during his/her day at school. We hope this will help you to plan your conference information sheet. If you have any questions, please feel at ease to call at any time.

Sincerely,
Unit C Staff

Homeroom	ABB	BIFANO	GRIFFIN	NELSON	SMITH	WILMS
Reading	ABB	BIFANO	GRIFFIN	NELSON	SMITH	WILMS
Math	ABB	BIFANO	GRIFFIN	NELSON	SMITH	WILMS
Spelling	ABB	BIFANO	GRIFFIN	NELSON	SMITH	WILMS
Language	ABB	BIFANO	GRIFFIN	NELSON	SMITH	WILMS
Penmanship	ABB	BIFANO	GRIFFIN	NELSON	SMITH	WILMS
Social Studies	ABB	BIFANO	GRIFFIN	NELSON	SMITH	WILMS
Science	ABB	BIFANO	GRIFFIN	NELSON	SMITH	WILMS

The following subject areas are taught by the special area people and by the homeroom teacher:

Art	Mr. Wallis	Homeroom Teacher
Music	Mr. Johns	Homeroom Teacher
Phy. Ed.	Mr. Blum	Homeroom Teacher

Others:

Learning Problem Specialist - Miss Kalweit

Psychologist - Mr. Schollmeier Counselor - Mr. Gronert

Reading Consultant - Mrs. Goodell Speech - Mr. Myers

Title I - Mrs. Briski (AM) & Mrs. Lind (PM)

Student's Name _____

Sample 14

Parent Agenda

March 21, 1977

Dear Parents,

Thank you for helping us plan a conference for your child _____. We hope that this conference will help you as parents and we as teachers better understand the progress of our children.

Your conference is arranged as follows:

	(Teacher)	(Date)	(Time)
___ Homeroom	_____	_____	_____
___ Reading	_____	_____	_____
___ Math	_____	_____	_____
___ Spelling	_____	_____	_____
___ Language	_____	_____	_____
___ Penmanship	_____	_____	_____
___ Social Studies	_____	_____	_____
___ Art, Music, Phy. Ed.	_____	_____	_____
___ Other	_____	_____	_____

The homeroom teacher will discuss achievement scores and ability levels if you have requested this information.

Sincerely,
Unit C Staff

- -

Please clip and return this portion

_____ I will keep my conference time.

_____ I am unable to keep my conference time.

_____ I can come at: _____
(Day) (Time)

Parent's Signature _____

Child's Name _____

Sample 15

Conference Survey

Dear Parents,

Unit C is making a survey of parents' feelings about parent-teacher conferences. We are attempting to improve conferences and are using this method to evaluate our system. We would appreciate your cooperation in completing this questionnaire.

Sincerely,
Unit C Teachers

1. Are conferences held often enough? Yes___ No___
2. Are conferences held too often? Yes___ No___
3. Did you like the way conferences were conducted this time? Yes___ No___
4. Was the chance to meet with more than one teacher helpful? Yes___ No___
5. Did you have any difficulty filling out the questionnaire which came home before conferences? Yes___ No___
6. Were you satisfied with your conference time? Yes___ No___
7. Did you feel comfortable and relaxed at the conference? Yes___ No___
8. Were you able to give your point of view and ask questions at the conference? Yes___ No___
9. Did you learn a little more about your child and his/her experience at _____ School? Yes___ No___
10. Do conferences result in better performance and learning by your child? Yes___ No___
11. Would you appreciate being called by your child's teacher between conferences? Yes___ No___
12. Would you call your child's teacher to set up a conference if you thought it was necessary? Yes___ No___
13. Do you feel your conference was worthwhile? Yes___ No___

    If not, why not? _____

    _____

    _____

14. What changes would you like to see in conferences in future?

    COMMENTS _____

    _____

Sample 16

Conference Survey - Unit D

Dear Parents,

Unit D is making a survey of parents' feelings about parent-teacher conferences. We are using this method to evaluate our system. We would appreciate your cooperation in completing this questionnaire.

Respectfully yours,

_____ _____
Unit Leader

1. Are conferences held often enough?	Yes____	No____
2. Are conferences held too often?	Yes____	No____
3. Do conferences usually give you the information you want?	Yes____	No____
4. Would you like to see some changes in the conferences?	Yes____	No____
5. Do you feel comfortable and relaxed at conferences?	Yes____	No____
6. Are you able to give your point of view and impressions at a conference?	Yes____	No____
7. Do conferences result in better performance and learning by your child?	Yes____	No____
8. Would you be willing to discuss the above questions?	Yes____	No____

Comments:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Sample 17

Potluck Information Letter

April 14, 1977

On Tuesday, April 26 at 5:30 there will be a sixth grade potluck at _____ School. All sixth graders and their families are invited.

Each family is asked to bring two dishes to pass: either a main dish and a salad or a main dish and dessert. Milk and coffee will be furnished; pop may be purchased for 15¢ a bottle. Please bring your own plates and tableware.

After dinner there will be a slide presentation by Mr. _____ and Mr. _____'s rooms on the sixth graders' trip to MacKenzie Game Farm. The students in Mrs. _____ and Miss _____'s rooms will have a Trade Fair with a play and music.

In order to determine how many tables to set up and how many beverages to have on hand, please fill out the form below and return it to school by Friday, April 22.

Hope to see your family at the potluck!

- -

Please fill in the blanks and return this section by Friday, April 22.

_____ will be coming to the potluck in our family.

_____ will want milk.

_____ will want pop.

_____ will want coffee.

Sample 18

Unit E Potluck - Evaluation

April 26, 1977

1. Do you think the potluck was worthwhile? ___Yes ___No

2. Did you learn anything about what your sixth grade child(ren) has been studying? ___Yes ___No

3. Did you appreciate the opportunity to learn about what the sixth graders have been studying? ___Yes ___No

4. What did you like best about the potluck? _____

_____

_____

5. What suggestions do you have for improving the potluck? _____

_____

_____

6. Would you attend a similar potluck in the future? ___Yes ___No

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

As the implementation process continued, the program coordinator was mainly involved in coordinating the subunits' efforts, providing suggestions of sources for essential resources, and stimulating the subunits to implement their plans. The subunits tended to modify their plans or to not meet their timelines. It was essential, therefore, for the program coordinator to keep the subunits on-task. The key decision makers in each subunit assumed major responsibility for initiating and coordinating the implementation of plans in their subunits. They supervised the procurement of resources, fulfillment of responsibilities, meeting of timelines, and evaluation of plans for each activity. All subunit teachers were responsible for actually implementing the plans.

At the same time that group efforts were being made, individual staff members implemented their own plans to improve school-community relations. One subunit B teacher expressed an interest in organizing several coffees. Within 24 hours of first mentioning the subject, she had planned two question-and-answer coffees and had initiated contact with parents of two students in her subunit to arrange coffees. In calling them she explained the activity and asked if they would be willing to invite some friends to their homes. During this informal session, the principal, the program coordinator, and the teacher would answer any school-related questions they might have. The final planning for the coffees was divided among the host mothers, the teacher, and the program coordinator. The mothers determined the invitation list, did the inviting, and provided the coffee and cookies. The teacher and program coordinator planned the procedure and evaluation form (see Sample 19).

Sample 19

Question and Answer Coffee - Evaluation

Host Home _____

Date _____

1. Do you think this question and answer coffee was worthwhile?

   _____ Yes _____ No

2. Was it helpful having both the unit leader and the principal there?

   _____ Yes _____ No

   If no, please explain: _____

   _____

3. What did you like best about the coffee? _____

   _____

4. How could it have been improved? _____

   _____

5. Would you be in favor of having more question and answer coffees?

   _____ Yes _____ No

6. What types of questions would you like answered at conferences?

   _____

   _____

An instructional game make-and-take workshop was implemented by the three Title I teachers on the staff. Parents of Title I students were invited through a letter (see Sample 20) to become involved in making instructional games which they could take home and use with their children. When the parents arrived, they were given supplies and a manual describing how to make various appropriate instructional games. A short presentation was made by the teachers on how to construct the games and use the manual. The parents then worked with the teachers to complete the games. The teachers took major responsibility for organizing, coordinating, and implementing the make-and-take workshop. The program coordinator played a minor role by coordinating this activity with the other activities.

Three teachers assumed major responsibility for producing regular classroom newsletters for parents. The only role of the program coordinator was to occasionally provide sources for information which the teachers could include in the newsletter. An example of a class newsletter is included in Sample 21.

Two teachers made home visits to make two-way communication about a student easier. One teacher received a call from a concerned parent who wanted a conference within a week. Because of the parents' complicated schedule, the teacher said she would come to their home. In the second instance, a teacher was called about a conference, which she offered to hold either in the school or at home; the latter alternative was selected. The teacher visited at length with the parents in

Sample 20

Parent Invitation Letter

Dear Parents:

You are invited to a "Make and Take" session, Wednesday, February 23rd. We will make games for you to take home and share with your children. Pre-K parents are invited to come during their child's class time 8:30-10:00 or 10:00 to 11:30. (Children will be in class on this day.) K-3 parents are invited to come anytime from 8:30-11:30 or 1:00-2:30. We know many of you preferred an evening get together, but due to the energy crunch we have been encouraged to use school hours for our activities. Our apologies for any inconveniences caused by the change.

Please bring old catalogs and magazines for picture sources. We would appreciate it if you could let us know if you can come, and at what time we could expect you. Please sign the slip at the bottom and return it by Monday, February 21.

Kay Briski
Sharlene Jung
Mary Lind

P.S. We will meet in the IMC.

- -

Return this portion by Monday, February 21.

I am planning on attending the "Make and Take" session on Wednesday, February 23rd.

Time you plan on coming _____

Signed _____

Sample 21

Pre-K Newsletter

November

Dear Parents:

November already! October seemed to fly by! We loved our trip to the Apple Orchard and enjoyed the applesauce we made, too. What fun we had at the farm. Muddy? Yes it was. We got a real taste of the farm and saw so many animals. The following morning we spent time in the woods. We had hoped to see bugs in their homes but it was too cold. The children did find moss, nuts, dried weeds, leaves, trees, bushes, grapevines and 1 lonely lady bug. To add to all this we had a Halloween party and during the month we learned many songs, fingerplays and made several art projects for the "spooky day". With all of the excitement last month we still found time to work on our colors, numbers and shapes. Believe me, we've been busy!

Now, in November we aren't going on a field trip--(relieved?) but we will continue to be very busy. Thanksgiving will be our main unit this month. We'll begin by talking about Indians and then move on to learning a little about Pilgrims and our first Thanksgiving. On November 24th from 10:30-11:30 we would like to share a "feast" with you. It will be a special day for the children so please set aside this hour and share it with them. The classes will share their songs, fingerplays and art work with you. PLEASE PLAN TO COME.

During November we will have several art projects and cooking experiences. Please save one coffee can 1 or 3 lb. size (we're making an Indian Tom-Tom) and a large grocery bag. We will send a note to let you know when to send these items. We will continue to work with colors, numbers and shapes. (We've discussed the diamond and the elipse shapes.) Each child is learning to recognize his name. You can help him by putting his name on his things, in his books, etc. We will have outdoor experiences so please dress the children for the weather. PLEASE HELP US by putting names in hats and mittens--the children do not recognize their own hats and mittens!

Feel free to visit our "rooms" or ask questions if you have any. Thank you for your excellent cooperation. If your child is experiencing any difficulties about school let us know and we'll see if we can help.

We will not have Parent-Teacher conferences in Pre-K until later in the year.

Please note: No school November 25th and 26th.

Don't forget to share books, stories, nursery rhymes and poems with your child--READ TO HIM EVERY DAY. (I'll tell you this every month it is so important.)

Sample 21 (Continued)

WAYS YOU CAN HELP YOUR CHILD

HELP YOUR CHILD UNDERSTAND WHAT HE SEES

Do you ever look at picture books together? Or magazines?

Pick out an action picture of a dog running. You can pick any action picture and play the I WONDER GAME:

I wonder where the dog is?
I wonder where he is going?
I wonder why he is running?
I wonder what will happen next?

Another example: A picture of a little boy coming in from outside.

I wonder where the boy was?
I wonder what he was doing?
I wonder what he'll do now?

Using the same pictures PLAY THE POINTING GAME:

"Point to the dog running."
"Point to the boy standing still."
"Point to the boy in the tree."

DEVELOP THE SENSE OF SIGHT

Take a nature walk and point out colors and shapes on the way. Look at the sky. Find funny shapes in the clouds. At the grocery store look for colors on labels. Find two labels that are the same. Find a circle--can you see a square? Playing a game often makes the trip more fun and less tedious for the child. Find a green vegetable, a yellow fruit, something round and red. Bring me two ears of corn--(children can read label pictures.)

HELP YOUR CHILD EXPRESS HIMSELF ORALLY

Talk to your child! Really talk to him. And then have the courtesy to listen to his ideas. Laugh with him and listen to his problems--what is very minor or nothing to us as adults, can be overwhelming to a child.

Make a sock puppet, (paper bags make puppets that are fun too!) and give it to your child. At first he may not show much interest in it but if you show him how I think he will find fun and language while he plays with that new friend.

Have a pretend telephone conversation with your child. They love to pretend they are the adult--why not let them.

CAN YOU ANSWER WHEN YOUR CHILD ASKS "WHY"?

Try to. He isn't always seeking information. He may just want a little conversation. Help him along in these first attempts.

the presence of the child and her siblings. In both cases the teachers assumed major responsibility for organizing the home visits. The only role of the program coordinator was to coordinate the home visits in the total school-community relations program.

The program coordinator assumed total responsibility for planning and implementing a school newsletter. The purpose of the newsletter was to improve communication between the school and homes. It provided prior notification about upcoming events, information about the students' instructional program, and notification about PTA expenditures. These had all been identified as problems during the needs assessment. The program coordinator produced the newsletter four times; it included a calendar of upcoming activities and a monthly menu of hot lunch meals. The first two editions included quizzes on names and responsibilities of school staff members and the instructional program. Two editions included suggestions on how parents could supplement the reading and mathematics programs of their children at home. Several articles explained new instructional programs. Two articles invited those interested in attending or hosting a question and answer coffee to contact the school. Achievements of students were recognized in each issue and one edition explained new conference procedures. Contributions of time and money were acknowledged regularly; PTA expenditures were listed. One article requested volunteers to donate slides, hobbies, or experiences to supplement social studies instruction. A sample of a newsletter is shown in Sample 22.

Each of the newly implemented activities was evaluated; the results

Sample 22

Sample Newsletter

_____'s Link

home ∞ school

April, 1977 Number 3

"Souper" Equipment

Thanks to all of the Campbell soup labels you have saved over the past year, the school will soon own one Kodak Instamatic camera, three projector screens, and one audio-visual equipment table. The 20,650 labels were sent on April 1. We hope to have the equipment before the end of the school year. Many thanks to you for your help in collecting labels.

Post Equipment

Thanks also for saving Post cereal box tops. With the 625 tops which were collected we have purchased 5 soccer balls for the school. We appreciate your Post donations.

Summer Gymnastics Camps

The University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire has announced two one-week gymnastics camps to be held this summer for girls 8-years-old and older. Beginning, Intermediate, and Advanced classes will be held from July 17 through 22 and July 24 through 29. Cost is $105.00 for room, board, and tuition for the week. Registration blanks for the camps are available at the school office.

Basketball Camps

Four one-week basketball camps will be taught at the University of Wisconsin-Madison by the University athletic staff. Instruction will focus

Sample 22 (Continued)

on ballhandling, passing, dribbling, position play, and defensive and offensive play. Students from 8 to 18 years of age are eligible. Cost is $120 for room and board for one week. Sessions are:

June 12 - 18 (boys)	July 10 - 16 (boys)
June 19 - 25 (boys)	July 17 - 23 (girls)

Registration blanks may be picked up at the school office.

Coffee Invitation

We once again extend an invitation to anyone interested to attend a question-and-answer coffee. These coffees are held in homes of _____ parents and are designed to be an opportunity for you to ask ___. _____ any questions you may have related to _____ School. There are two coffees scheduled for May. If you are interested in attending one, just call the school office.

Sixth Grade Potluck

All _____ sixth graders and their families are invited to a potluck on Tuesday, April 26 at 5:30. Besides good food and fellowship, there will be a program which the students have prepared on their trip to Poynette and a Trade Fair. A reservation sheet has been sent home with all sixth graders. Be sure to return it so we have enough tables and beverages for everyone.

Testing

Our annual standardized testing will be conducted from April 18 to 28. Second through sixth graders will be given achievement tests; second, fourth, and sixth graders will also be given ability tests. We would greatly appreciate your cooperation with this testing. Proper eating and adequate sleep have a definite effect on the students' performance on the tests. Your stressing to the students the importance of the tests and doing their best will also be helpful. Test results should be returned to the school by May 31, if you are

Sample 22 (Continued)

interested in how your children did.

Second Again

As the February _____'s Link stated, we were trying for first place in the newspaper collection competition. Unfortunately, we came in second again, with Roosevelt in first place. But it isn't too late -- we have one more chance this month. So please continue putting your newspaper in the bin by the parking lot. Maybe we can finish the year in first place!

News About TV News

The University of Wisconsin-Madison conducted a study of students' impressions of local and national news shows at _____ on Friday, April 13. Among the questions which the study was attempting to answer were: How much do students watch the news? Which news broadcasts do they watch? Why do the students watch the news? What is their opinion of why the news items are included on the news? Hopefully the results of the study will influence how news programs are broadcast in the future.

Congratulations

Congratulations are in order for:

- the _____ sixth graders for their excellent behavior on the field trip to Poynette. The Department of Natural Resources officials reported that our students were among the best behaved groups they have ever had there. We are proud of you, sixth graders, for representing our school so well. The actual D.N.R. letter is included on page 6 .
- the _____ third graders for their excellent progress and behavior during the Drownproofing program at the Y.M.C.A. By the end of the ten lessons, there was noticable progress by everyone. Thanks also to the parents who donated their valuable time to chaperone the

Sample 22 (Continued)

group and to the teachers who dried over 100 towels every night.

- all of the parents who returned the many questionnaires which have been sent home during the past month. Out of 390 questionnaires sent home on student pictures, 195 were returned. That is an excellent rate of return. Although we didn't count how many of the report card questionnaires were sent back, there were lots. We thank you for your interest in the school and the time you took to fill out the questionnaires.

- _____ _____ for winning third place in the _____ library poster contest. Entrants from throughout the district competed. _____ placed third among the posters of all fifth graders in the city. She and her parents attended the awards presentation on Saturday, April 16 at the _____ Public Library.

Mark Your Calendar

April 18 - Boy Scouts physical fitness

April 19 - P.T.A. (6:30 - Board meeting, 7:30 - P.T.A.)

April 18 - 28 - Standardized testing, grades 2 through 6.

April 22 - Curriculum Day; all students dismissed at 11:15 for the afternoon.

April 25 - Boy Scout Pack meeting - 6:30

April 26 - Sixth grade potluck - 5:30

Sample 22 (Continued)

5.

How Parents Can Help in the Arithmetic Program

Give your child practical experience using arithmetic at home. For example:

1. Mention the size of containers, such as pints of cream and half gallons of milk.
2. Allow your child to help you bake and actually measure ingredients.
3. When laying carpet or tile or seeding or fertilizing a lawn, allow your child to help in measuring areas or quantities of material.
4. Before a shopping trip, have your child read newspaper ads and price the cost of items to be purchased. Let him compare prices and quantities marked on containers to determine the best buys.
5. Provide him with experiences telling time, using the calendar, reading a thermometer, barometer or even a stop-watch.
6. Let him calculate age, weight, height, or dimensions.
7. Figuring gas mileage, tolls, and other trip expenses are all learning experiences.
8. Games like monopoly, dominoes, cribbage, and bingo can improve his use of numbers.
9. Give an older child the job of checking bank statements against cancelled checks.
10. If the child is having difficulty with multiplication tables, buy or make flash cards and use them on a regular basis. He will enjoy giving answers he knows and will learn more complex problems through drill.
11. Let your child explain the arithmetic papers he brings home from school, and take the time to help him correct and understand his mistakes.

Remember: The average child spends 900 hours a year in the classroom and 3,285 hours sleeping, which leaves 4,575 hours a year "left over." Those 4,575 hours are golden opportunities to stretch your child's learning wings and build at home on what he learns in school, to work along with his teachers to spark his curiosity, energy, and enthusiasm for learning. Choose opportunities that fit your child's age and interests. All children need parental encouragement, guidance, and support.

Source: Golden Opportunities to Build on What Your Child Learns in School, produced by the parents and staff of the Springfield, Massachusetts public schools.

Sample 22 (Continued)

6.

State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Resident Center
Poynette, Wis. 53955

Anthony S. Earl
Secretary

BOX 450
MADISON, WISCONSIN 53701

March 24, 1977

IN REPLY REFER TO: 8510

Dear Bob and Paul:

Attached please find requested summaries of the evaluations.

We really enjoyed your groups' visit to the MacKenzie Center. I hope that you and your students did too.

Thinking back over the many groups that have used this facility, we all feel that your 2 groups were some of the best that we have had. Your organization and students' enthusiasm were great!

Also, it was very pleasant to conduct a program that had such intent and courteous listeners.

Please pass this information on to your principal. She was the first principal that has gotten actively involved with any of our programs. It was great to see her here!

Sincerely,

Joel L. Stone
Resident Coordinator

JLS:ml

attach.

THIS IS 100% RECYCLED PAPER

are reported next. Only informal evaluation data exist on the use of commendation forms in subunits A and B. Informal feedback from parents at the question and answer coffees revealed that both parents and children were delighted with the new approach to reporting pupil progress. Comments also indicated that parents were more aware of the current instructional program of their children. Several parents of students in classes which had not participated in the program inquired about why their children were not involved. Additional goals were set when students attained the original goals and were eager to continue.

The responses of parents to the conference evaluation form used in subunit C are reported in Sample 23. The responses reveal that parents were generally satisfied with the frequency of conferences, the new procedures, and the results of the conferences. They made only a few suggestions about how to improve future parent-teacher conferences.

The results of the subunit D survey are reported in Sample 24. As in subunit C, most parents of subunit D students were pleased with the frequency and content of parent-teacher conferences. Their major suggestion for improving conferences was to base their frequency on the students' needs. Parents preferred more conferences if a student was having difficulty and fewer if the student was doing well. They also expressed a desire to meet with more than the homeroom teacher of their child and to have a standard format which all teachers would follow during the conference. Because of this survey, subunit D teachers changed several of their conference procedures. Shortly after the results had been compiled, the subunit's key decision maker approached the program coordinator to report that his teachers were interested in developing

Sample 23

Subunit C - Conference Survey Results

	QUESTION	YES
1.	Are conferences held often enough?	54
2.	Are conferences held too often?	1
3.	Did you like the way conferences were conducted this time?	57
4.	Was the chance to meet with more than one teacher helpful?	50
5.	Did you have any difficulty filling out the questionnaire which came home before the conferences?	6
6.	Were you satisfied with your conference time?	58
7.	Did you feel comfortable and relaxed at the conference?[1]	56
8.	Were you able to give your point of view and ask questions at the conference?	59
9.	Did you learn a little more about your child and his/her experiences at _____ School?[2]	54
10.	Do conferences result in better performance and learning by your child?	49

[1] In answer to this question, 1 added "sometimes."

[2] In answer to this question, 1 added "sometimes."

QUESTION	YES
11. Would you appreciate being called by your child's teacher between conferences?[3]	51
12. Would you call your child's teacher to set up a conference if you thought it was necessary?[4]	57
13. Do you feel your conference was worthwhile?	58

* * * * * * * * *

14. What changes would you like to see in conferences in the future?

** More evening hours for working people.

** Too short (mentioned twice)

** If teachers are having a problem, have them call the parents and discuss it with them.

** If a child is having problems, set up a conference; if not, don't have a conference.

** Keep up conferences; it's nice to know how children are doing.

** They're very helpful the way they are now.

[3]In answer to this question, 8 added "if needed;" 5 added "if problems arise;" 1 added "if ne sary about change in work."

[4]In answer to this question, 1 added "if needed."

QUESTION

14. What changes would you like to see in conferences in the future? (Continued)

** I had the impression that we would always have a conference with the homeroom teacher so I did not check that particular teacher. I think it should be better explained on the sheet you first sent home.

** I like knowing how my child is doing according to his ability, not according to how the class is doing.

** So far they are just fine.

** I would like to see a conference after the second period to make sure my child is progressing as he needs to be. The third quarter is too late to correct problems long established.

** I like this procedure. I can't think of anything to improve it.

** I didn't learn anything more than I already knew.

** I like this just the way it is.

** Adjustable times because some parents require more conference time.

Sample 24

Subunit D - Conference Survey Results

QUESTION	YES	NO
1. Are conferences held often enough?[1]	78	3
2. Are conferences held too often?	5	75
3. Do conferences usually give you the information you want?[2]	77	1
4. Would you like to see some changes in the conferences?[3]	12	66
5. Do you feel comfortable and relaxed in the conferences?[4]	80	0
6. Are you able to give your point of view and impressions at a conference?[5]	79	0
7. Do conferences result in better performance and learning by your child?[6]	66	4
8. Would you be willing to discuss the above questions?	76	3

[1]For this question, the following comments were added: "unless more are warranted," "unless problems arise."

[2]For this question, the following comments were added: "some do," "mostly."

[3]For this question, the following comment was added: "maybe more time."

[4]For this question, the following comment was added: "sometimes."

[5]For this question, the following comments were added: "sometimes," "some of them."

[6]For this question, the following comments were added: "don't know" (mentioned 4 times), "some what," "for a few days," "helps parents - maybe the child," "when there is cooperation between parent and teacer," "after I find out a problem, I can help him improve."

COMMENTS
** They are informative to parents.
** Stay as is.
** I think it's a good idea!
** I feel conferences are a good time for the parents and teachers to compare his individual ability and faults. For some it's the only time they visit the school.
** If the child is doing fairly well then the conferences are held often enough. But if there are problems, then there should be conferences more often (mentioned twice).
** Having conferences more often would be better if time allowed.
** Set up guidelines for all teachers to follow so that you always get the information wanted have a chance to communicate both ways.
** Need to be better informed on inner workings of classroom to discuss the questions.
** Would like to speak to other teachers that teach your child.
** Should be more than 2 a year, according to the needs of the child.
** Teachers should talk about the child, not other unrelated things.
** Call in-between if there is trouble.
** Don't have conferences if there is no need.

Sample 24 (Continued)

COMMENTS
** If they have different teachers for other subjects, I would like to see them.
** I prefer a conference in the fall and then as needed for the child.
** If a child needs the extra conferences, it should be given so the parents know where the bo or girl is and doing.
** Longer, at times, when needed. Teachers and parents should feel more free about calling co ferences at any time felt necessary.
** Conferences cover most of the basic information of the work and fun that my children do in school.
** I think the last conference should be held earlier in either February or the first part of March so we have more time to help children improve before the end of the year.
** I feel they are fine; some more time would be nice to get to know the teacher better - 1/2 hour.
** I think conferences should only be held when the student is doing poorly.
** Phone conferences for second conference; no conference if not needed.
** Yes, I would be willing to discuss the above questions. However, it all really boils down communication and cooperation as far as conferences are concerned.

a conference guide. The guide was compiled and included topics in each academic area and in the affective domain the teachers would discuss during conferences.

Of the 90 families in subunit E, 48 attended the potluck; total attendance was approximately 260 people. Evaluation forms were distributed after the program and responses are reported in Sample 25. Everyone found the potluck worthwhile, informative, and enjoyable. They particularly appreciated the food, fellowship, and program. They suggested that more room be provided in the future but had no other major suggestions. Many parents thanked the staff for their efforts and asked for future potlucks.

Five question and answer coffees were held. At the conclusion of each coffee, the program coordinator distributed a short questionnaire which included one question on the content of conferences. The evaluation results of one coffee and the list of questions asked are presented in Samples 26 and 27. The questionnaire responses indicated a favorable reaction to this innovation. Respondents reported feeling relaxed about asking questions and they enjoyed hearing the opinions of others. Several commented that it was a good opportunity to meet new people. Everyone appreciated having the principal and, when possible, a teacher there. Many suggested having more time for the coffees; several suggested limiting the agenda.

As a result of these suggestions, several alterations were made. First, the project coordinator recommended that the hostess limit the group to between 6 and 10 people so more of their questions could be

Sample 25

Subunit E Potluck Evaluation

1. Do you think the potluck was worthwhile? 44 Yes 0 No

2. Did you learn anything about what your sixth-grade child(ren) has been studying?
44 Yes 0 No

3. Did you appreciate the opportunity to learn about what the sixth graders have been studyin
44 Yes 0 No

4. What did you like best about the potluck?

"the food" (mentioned 17 times)
"the variety of food" (mentioned 4 times)
"seeing the program" (mentioned 9 times)
"getting together to see what our kids can do"
"The potluck would be worthless without some activity following it."
"I believe the program was very different - better than the normal potluck entertaining
"the chance to meet some of the parents of my child's friends" (mentioned 6 times)
"fellowship" (mentioned 6 times)
"getting to know different people"
"singing"
"very orderly"
"the way we drew names for each table to go up [to get food]"
"the good turnout" (mentioned 3 times)

5. What suggestions do you have for improving the potluck?

"put articles for sale in hallway so more room for chairs in room"
"more room - bigger place to eat; more tables" (mentioned 12 times)

"It needs to be divided into two sessions. There were too many people for one group." (mentioned 3 times)
"One family should bring either a hot dish or dessert or salad, not both." (mentioned 2 times)
"more time to meet people/parents/students/teachers"
"one long table of food in the hallway"
"I would like to see more of the children getting into a program of sorts."
"more coffee"
"double serving lines, on both sides"
"a prayer before we eat"

6. Would you attend a similar potluck in the future? 44 Yes 0 No

Comments:

"I think it is great for the children and parents to share their learning. The idea of gathering is great."
"It should be tried again."
"happy we attended"
"thought it was great - got to see a variety of things the students do"
"I appreciate the hard work of the young people."
"Your program was great."
"It was a good idea for the potluck because the sixth graders will be leaving for a new school next year. It will give them some wonderful memories.
"very nice program; liked the things for sale"
"good program and a big thank you to all the teachers and parents who made it possible"
"glad the entire family was included - really a good experience"
"very nice - well arranged"
"very well set up and delicious food"

Sample 25 (Continued)

"program length was about right"
"no more than one a year"
"It was terrific."
"I enjoyed the evening. Teachers are to be commended for the extra effort to make this possible. I think _____ is a great school. You do so many interesting things kids will remember."
"We needed this for years!"
"good program; enthusiasm of kids; very well organized; nice evening"
"very worthwhile - thank you"

Sample 26

Question-and-Answer Coffee #3 - Evaluation

Date: March 7, 1977

Number present: 7 parents, the principal, and the project coordinator

1. Do you think this question-and-answer coffee was worthwhile? 6 Yes 0 No
2. Was it helpful having the principal there? 4 Yes 0 No
3. What did you like best about the coffee?

   "giving of your opinions and getting someone else's"
   "very informal"
   "chance to listen to others' opinions"
   "openness"
   "chance to ask questions in small group"
   "chance to learn what's going on"

4. How could it have been improved?

   "more time"

5. Would you be in favor of having more question-and-answer coffees? 6 Yes 0 No
6. What types of questions would you like answered at conferences?

   "child's attitude toward class and work"
   "behavior and behavior problems"
   "type of work class is doing"
   "type of work child is doing"
   "working up to ability"

Sample 27

Questions Asked at Question-and-Answer Coffee #3

1. Why doesn't the PTA set money-making goals rather than simply raising more money? Why don parents decide on something big for the school rather than just getting the things teachers ask for?
2. What is the purpose of the PTA? What are its goals and objectives?
3. Why can't you stagger the lunch hour?
4. Has the sex education program been implemented?
5. Will students get the same teacher three years in a row?
6. Do the students have to go on the Poynette trip?
7. Do teachers get paid for noon hour supervision?
8. Can more students eat lunch in their rooms?
9. What hours do teachers have to work?
10. Why weren't there more teachers at the PTA square dance?
11. Have you considered having grade-level potluck suppers?
12. How can we find out what our child is studying in school?

addressed. This resulted in fewer complaints on the questionnaire about lack of time at the remaining coffees.

Another change was to focus questions on one subject. At the third coffee, people asked questions on the lunchroom situation. When no additional questions on this subject remained, they asked questions on any school-related topic. Limiting people to one topic proved to be stifling, however. For the fourth and fifth coffee, therefore, the questions were not limited and the discussion flowed more freely once again.

Many questions at the coffees were directed at the lack of information about the school curriculum. These included the consistency among teachers in terms of curriculum, the opportunities for parents to become involved in curriculum development, and the content of various curriculum areas. Discipline was also a major concern. Parents questioned the consistency of teachers in behavioral expectations, the discipline situation in double classrooms, and the procedures for dealing with misbehavior. Other major categories of questions included the lunchroom situation, traffic hazards near the school, and report cards.

Informal observations of the instructional game make-and-take indicated it was well received. Attendance at the workshop was good; 27 out of 90 parents participated. Many students commented that they had played the game and enjoyed the extra attention from their parents.

Little direct feedback was received about the individual class newsletters other than during the initial needs assessment. Parents responded well to requests and announcements included in the newsletters.

No formal evaluations of home visits were made, but informal data exist. Both teachers found the visits to be rewarding experiences. The teacher in subunit C believed her extra effort in taking the conference to the home made communication and cooperation easier. The teacher learned a great deal about the child in the home environment.

Comments at several coffees indicated that parents appreciated the school newsletter. One mother reported how much she enjoyed the quizzes on the staff and school program. Other mothers commented on how helpful the calendar and menu were. Another told how excited her daughter was to have her story published. These comments indicated that the newsletter was communicating with these parents.

The responsibilities of the various staff members in planning and implementing the school-community relations activities mentioned above are summarized in Sample 28. An examination of this chart reveals that planning, organizing, coordinating, and evaluating subunit activities was primarily the responsibility of the subunit key decision maker and the program coordinator. Planning, organizing, coordinating, and evaluating individual activities was frequently the responsibility of the teacher and the program coordinator. One of the program coordinator's major tasks was to stimulate others to try new activities.

Sample 28

Roles and Responsibilities in Implementing School-Community Relations Activities

ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBILITIES				
	PLAN	ORGANIZE	MOTIVATE	COORDINATE	EVALUATE
Innovations in Reporting Pupil Progress	MKDM KDM-u PC-s	MKDM KDM-u PC-s	KDM-u PC-s	MKDM KDM-u PC-s	KDM-u PC-s
Question-and-Answer Coffees	T PC	T PC	PC	PC	T PC
Make-and-Take Workshop	T	T	PC	T	T PC
Class Newsletters	T	T	PC	T	PC
Home Visits	T	T	PC		T PC
School Newsletter	PC	PC		PC	PC

Key:

KDM = Key Decision Makers
PC = Program Coordinator
s = Schoolwide
MKDM = Meeting of Key Decision Makers
T = Teacher
u = in the subunit

CHAPTER V

PROGRAM EVALUATION

After a school has implemented its school-community relations plans, the program must be evaluated. This chapter begins with a discussion of the goal of program evaluation: to provide feedback from program implementation for future program planning. The chapter continues with a description of the process of program evaluation. In this section, information on how the evaluation should be conducted and how the information should be incorporated into future planning is presented. The chapter concludes with a report of the evaluation procedure used in the school mentioned in the previous three chapters.

The Goal of Program Evaluation

Throughout the implementation of the school-community relations program, individual activities are both formally and informally evaluated. Data are taken to determine which specific aspects of each activity were effective and which were not. Some information may be incorporated into plans for upcoming activities; other information will need to be considered when making program plans for future years.

As individual activities are operationalized, their effectiveness helps determine the effectiveness of the entire program. Some results of formal and informal evaluation are incorporated into the ongoing program; other data provide valuable feedback for future program planning. Program evaluation which takes place during program

implementation is called formative evaluation.

When the total program plan has been implemented, it is possible to determine the results of the entire program. The effect of all of the activities and techniques can be determined and the progress toward reaching program goals can be assessed. Program evaluation which takes place following program implementation is called summative evaluation.

The goal of both formative and summative program evaluation is to gather information which is essential for future program development. For example, the implemented program usually focuses on a few high-priority goals. In addition, certain approaches and activities are selected for attaining these goals. Through program evaluation the staff can determine whether new goals should be considered for future planning. Successful approaches will be emphasized and unsuccessful ones modified.

The Evaluation Process

Method of Data Collection

Interviews. Three techniques provide the necessary information for program evaluation: interviews, questionnaires, and observation. Interviews have similar advantages and disadvantages to those mentioned for needs assessment in Chapter II. They provide: (a) a maximum amount of information from a small portion of the community, (b) an opportunity for clarification, and (c) an atmosphere of trust and rapport. On the other hand, conducting interviews is time consuming and requires training of interviewers.

To collect data for formative evaluation, it is possible to

conduct a limited number of interviews throughout program implementation. Interviews with approximately 5% of the community members, selected at random, would provide sufficient feedback to determine the effectiveness of the activities and program. Informal interviews with approximately 2% of the staff members during the year would also provide valuable data on program implementation.

More interviews must be conducted to provide data for summative evaluation. To obtain reactions from a broad representation of the community, quantities similar to those listed in Table 2, Chapter II are necessary. As with the needs assessment, approximately 25% of the staff should be interviewed for summative evaluation data.

The interview content for both formative and summative program evaluation should be similar to that suggested for the needs assessment (see Table 1, Chapter II). Data must be obtained on: (a) staff and community members' perceptions of existing school-community relations, (b) school-community relations processes in use, (c) staff's perceptions of existing programmatic characteristics, and (d) reactions to existing school-community relations activities. Questions should be stated in an open-ended format. Ideally, a group of objective, trained interviewers should be brought in from outside the school district to conduct the interviews and compile the data.

Questionnaires. Questionnaires have the same advantages and disadvantages for program evaluation as for needs assessment (see Chapter II). They are less time consuming in terms of administration, provide data which can be easily compiled, and assure consistency of

questions. However, questionnaires typically provide less complete data, have a low rate of return, and provide no opportunity to clarify responses.

During formative evaluation, questionnaires should be distributed to approximately 10% of the community and 5% of the staff; both groups should be selected at random. For summative evaluation, approximately 25% of the staff should complete program evaluation questionnaires. Quantities similar to those shown in Table 2, Chapter II should be completed by community members.

Open-ended questions may be used on both formative and summative program evaluation questionnaires. Or the questions may be very specific and require the use of a scale to indicate the extent of the respondents' feelings. The questionnaires should cover the same content as suggested for program evaluation interviews. A sample of a questionnaire designed to obtain community members' perceptions in terms of school-community relations is provided in Sample 29.

Observations. Observation of the results can supply valuable information, but it may not be objective. The viewpoint of the observer too easily colors his or her observations. To prevent possible distortion of data, it is strongly recommended that observation be used only as a supplement to interview or questionnaire results. In such a combination, observation provides an accurate check of interview and questionnaire data.

Observation can provide an indication of how the program is generally progressing and how the activities are being received. Observation also

Sample 29

School-Community Relations Questionnaire

We would appreciate your rating our school in terms of school-community relations. Please use the scale which follows to indicate the extent to which each statement describes our school.

3 = frequently

2 = sometimes

1 = infrequently or never

Teacher-Parent Communication

____ 1. Teachers make parents feel welcome at the school.

____ 2. Teachers initiate communication with parents.

____ 3. Teachers encourage parents to contact them.

____ 4. Teachers listen to parents' comments.

____ 5. Teachers accept parents' reports of the reaction of their children to school; teachers do not hold the comments against the students.

____ 6. Teachers incorporate parents' comments and suggestions into their teaching.

____ 7. Teachers freely share information about a child with the parents of the child.

____ 8. Teachers are easy to contact through notes, telephone, or school visits.

____ 9. Parents have no hesitancy about contacting a teacher about their child's work in school.

____ 10. Teachers are warm and friendly when talking with parents.

Principal-Parent Communication

____ 1. The principal initiates communication with parents.

____ 2. The principal encourages parents to contact him/her.

____ 3. The principal listens to parents' comments.

Sample 29 (Continued)

____ 4. The principal makes parents feel welcome at the school.

____ 5. The principal accepts parents' reports of the reaction of their children to school.

____ 6. The principal utilizes parents' comments and suggestions.

____ 7. The principal is warm and friendly when talking with parents.

____ 8. The principal considers parents as a source of help.

____ 9. The principal communicates parents' concerns to the teachers.

____ 10. The principal is easy to get in touch with through the telephone, school visits, or notes.

____ 11. Parents have no hesitancy about contacting the principal about their child's work at school.

Parent Involvement

____ 1. Parents are welcomed at the school to work with students in the ongoing program of the school.

____ 2. Parents are asked to share their hobbies, travels, and other talents with students at the school.

____ 3. Parents are encouraged to participate in parent organizations at the school.

____ 4. Parents are encouraged to donate their time in making costumes, games, bulletin boards, etc. for the school.

Parent Participation

____ 1. Parents participate in making decisions about their child's program at school.

____ 2. Parents participate in making decisions about the ongoing program of the school.

____ 3. Parents participate in making decisions about the parent organization at the school.

Sample 29 (Continued)

Resolution

____ 1. The teachers quickly solve any problems which develop regarding the school.

____ 2. The principal quickly solves any problems which develop regarding the school.

Parent Analysis

____ 1. The school attempts to identify problems and needs of the school before they become large problems.

____ 2. The school attempts to identify people who are concerned about particular problems before the problems become large.

produces information about successful and unsuccessful aspects of the program, and indicates what changes have resulted from implementation.

Utilizing Program Evaluation Data

As discussed in Chapter IV, the school would be in a continual state of disruption and never accomplish its goals if evaluation data were continually being integrated into the upcoming program plans. Although some of the evaluation results can and should be considered as program plans are being implemented, other information should be saved for future years.

Formative and summative evaluation results point out techniques and activities which were successful in meeting program goals and improving school-community relations. Successful techniques and activities are incorporated to a limited extent into ongoing plans and extensively incorporated into future program planning. Less successful techniques and activities are modified, whenever possible, in ongoing plans and eliminated or modified in the future.

New or recurring problems and needs may be revealed through program evaluation and will have to be faced in the future. Program evaluation also indicates which of the original problems have been solved and no longer need high-priority attention.

As a result of summative evaluation, the planning worksheet (see Table 5) should be reviewed for its appropriateness for future planning. Goal statements will need to be reviewed, new goal statements added, and resource requirements modified.

Once the summative program evaluation is complete and the results have been incorporated into a long-range planning worksheet, the entire process of setting up a school-community relations program begins to recycle. A limited needs assessment may need to be conducted if insufficient data has been collected through program evaluation. Program planning must incorporate the findings of the program implemented during the past year. Program implementation and evaluation will follow.

With each year of program implementation, school-community relations should improve. The school and its program should become more understood and accepted by the community. Community members should believe they have more access to the school staff. As a result, the development and growth of students should be maximized.

Program Evaluation - A Case Study

In the school-community relations program mentioned previously, evaluation data were collected in two ways. First, a formal summative program evaluation among both staff and community members was conducted after the program plans had been fully implemented. In addition, informal formative and summative program evaluation data were collected by the program coordinator. A description of these program evaluations follows.

Formal Summative Program Evaluation

Summative program evaluation data were collected by distributing a questionnaire to both the staff and parents. Respondents were asked

to indicate on a four-point scale the extent of change they had observed in various aspects of relations between the school and the homes. They were also asked to indicate their interest in continuing the newly implemented activities in the future. A sample of the questionnaire distributed to staff members is presented in Sample 30; parents received a similar questionnaire, which is shown in Sample 31.

Of the 51 questionnaires distributed to the staff, 37 were returned. The results are reported in Sample 32. All but 2 of the 37 staff members believed that use of the five school-community relations processes was at least somewhat improved during the program. According to these staff members, efforts to communicate and resolve conflict showed the most improvement; opportunities for involvement and participation improved to some extent. The staff also reported that accessibility to the school was much improved, and the school's legitimacy in the community was somewhat improved. The staff members showed support for all individual school-community relations activities except having conferences in the homes of students.

Of the 390 questionnaires distributed to the families in the school, 231 were returned. The responses are summarized in Sample 33. Most of the parents who responded had had children at the school for a number of years. Parents new to the school hesitated to complete questions two through eight. The responses of the parents were similar to staff responses. Most parents saw some improvement in the use of the five school-community relations processes. They reported more improvement in communication and involvement than participation and resolution.

Sample 30

Staff Program Evaluation Questionnaire

April 29, 1977

Dear _____,

In making plans for next year, we need some reactions from you as to some of our school-community relations efforts this year. I would appreciate your filling out the questionnaire and returning it to me by Wednesday, May 4. Thanks!

1.	One of our goals this year has been to improve the communication from the school to the home. How would you judge the communication from the school this year? Circle one:	Much improved Somewhat improved Not improved Worse
2.	We have also attempted to provide more opportunities for parents and staff members to discuss school-related topics. How would you judge the opportunities for parents to discuss their concerns and questions with the staff? Circle one:	Much improved Somewhat improved Not improved Worse
3.	Our third goal has been to provide more opportunities for parents to become involved in what is happening at school. How would you judge the opportunities for parents to become involved? Circle one:	Much improved Somewhat improved Not improved Worse
4.	We have tried to provide more opportunities for parents to help in making decisions affecting their children and the school. How would you judge the opportunities of parents to participate in decision making at the school? Circle one:	Much improved Somewhat improved Not improved Worse
5.	Another goal has been to try to solve problems and concerns of parents regarding the school. How would you judge the opportunities of parents to have their school-related problems solved? Circle one:	Much improved Somewhat improved Not improved Worse
6.	We have attempted to create an atmosphere in which parents would feel free to approach teachers and/or the principal with their concerns related to the school. How would you judge their opportunities to discuss their concerns? Circle one:	Much improved Somewhat improved Not improved Worse
7.	Finally, we have tried to have the school reflect the wishes and desires of the parents which it serves. How would you judge the success of the school in this goal? Circle one:	Much improved Somewhat improved Not improved Worse

Sample 30 (Continued)

Do you think we should continue:

- the chance for parents to see more than one teacher during conferences, as in Unit C the last conference time?	Yes	No	Don't know
- the chance to have parents tell you what they would like to discuss during conferences, as in Unit C the last conference time?	Yes	No	Don't know
- the awards for students when they complete their work, as in Units A and B this year?	Yes	No	Don't know
- the unit potluck, as in Unit E this year?	Yes	No	Don't know
- the coffees for answering parents' questions?	Yes	No	Don't know
- the workshop for making games for children, as in Title I this year?	Yes	No	Don't know
- the newsletters from classes?	Yes	No	Don't know
- the school newsletter?	Yes	No	Don't know
- having conferences in students' homes?	Yes	No	Don't know
- sending questionnaires home to ask parents' opinions on school-related topics?	Yes	No	Don't know
- student presentations at PTA?	Yes	No	Don't know
- notices sent home with the oldest child?	Yes	No	Don't know

Comments: _____

_____

_____

Sample 31

Parent Program Evaluation Questionnaire

April 29, 1977

Dear Parents,

We are presently involved in making plans for next year. To do this planning, we need some reactions from you to some of our efforts this year. We would appreciate your filling out the questionnaire and returning it to school by Wednesday, May 4. Thanks!

1.	For how many years have you had children at _____ School?	____years
2.	One of our goals this year has been to improve the communication from the school to the home. How would you judge the communication from the school this year? Circle one:	Much improved Somewhat improved Not improved Worse
3.	We have also attempted to provide more opportunities for parents and staff members to discuss school-related topics. How would you judge the opportunities for you to discuss your concerns and questions? Circle one:	Much improved Somewhat improved Not improved Worse
4.	Our third goal has been to provide more opportunities for you to become involved in what is happening at school. How would you judge your opportunities to become involved? Circle one:	Much improved Somewhat improved Not improved Worse
5.	We have tried to provide more opportunities for you to help in making decisions affecting your children and the school. How would you judge your opportunities to participate in decision making at the school? Circle one:	Much improved Somewhat improved Not improved Worse
6.	Another goal has been to try to solve problems and concerns of parents regarding the school. How would you judge your opportunities to have your school-related problems solved? Circle one:	Much improved Somewhat improved Not improved Worse
7.	We have attempted to create an atmosphere in which you would feel free to approach teachers and/or the principal with your concerns related to the school. How would you judge your opportunities to discuss your concerns? Circle one:	Much improved Somewhat improved Not improved Worse

Sample 31 (Continued)

8. Finally, we have tried to have the school reflect the wishes and desires of the parents which it serves. How would you judge the success of the school in this goal? Circle one:

Much improved
Somewhat improved
Not improved
Worse

Do you think we should continue:

- the chance for you to see more than one teacher during conferences, as in Unit C the last conference time? Yes No Don't know
- the chance to tell the teachers what you would like to discuss during conferences, as in Unit C the last conference time? Yes No Don't know
- the awards for students when they complete their work, as in Units A and B this year? Yes No Don't know
- the unit potluck, as in Unit E this year? Yes No Don't know
- the coffees for answering your questions? Yes No Don't know
- the workshop for making games for your children, as in Title I this year? Yes No Don't know
- the newsletters from classes? Yes No Don't know
- the school newsletter? Yes No Don't know
- having conferences in students' homes? Yes No Don't know
- sending questionnaires home to ask your opinions on school-related topics (report cards, etc.)? Yes No Don't know
- student presentations at PTA? Yes No Don't know
- notices sent home with the oldest child? Yes No Don't know

Comments: _____

_____

_____

Sample 32

Staff Questionnaire - Results

QUESTION	MUCH IMPROVED	SOMEWHAT IMPROVED	NOT IMPROVED	WO
1. One of our goals this year has been to improve the communication from the school to the home. How would you judge the communication from the school this year?	24	11	0	
2. We have also attempted to provide more opportunities for parents and staff members to discuss school-related topics. How would you judge the opportunities for parents to discuss their concerns and questions with the staff?	26	8	1	
3. Our third goal has been to provide more opportunities for parents to become involved in what is happening at school. How would you judge the opportunities for parents to become involved?	11	25	0	
4. We have tried to provide more opportunities for parents to help in making decisions affecting their children and the school. How would you judge the opportunities of parents to participate in decision making at the school?	10	22	2	

Sample 32 (Continued)

QUESTION	MUCH IMPROVED	SOMEWHAT IMPROVED	NOT IMPROVED	WO
5. Another goal has been to try to solve problems and concerns of parents regarding the school. How would you judge the opportunities of parents to have their school-related problems solved?	22	13	1	
6. We have attempted to create an atmosphere in which parents would feel free to approach teachers and/or the principal with their concerns related to the school. How would you judge their opportunities to discuss their concerns?	21	16	0	
7. Finally, we have tried to have the school reflect the wishes and desires of the parents which it serves. How would you judge the success of the school in this goal?	11	24	1	

Sample 32 (Continued)

DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD CONTINUE:	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
- the chance for parents to see more than one teacher during conferences, as in Unit C the last conference time?[1]	30	1	5
- the chance to have parents tell you what they would like to discuss during conferences, as in Unit C the last conference time?	32	1	2
- the awards for students when they complete their work, as in Units A and B this year?[2]	28	2	5
- the unit potluck, as in Unit E this year?[3]	30	0	6
- the coffees for answering parents' questions?[4]	29	0	5

[1]For this question, the following comment was added: "We'll need more conference time."

[2]For this question, the following comment was added: "We must set up some grade-level goals."

[3]For this question, the following comments were added: "Don't overdo this; maybe have two per year, always one for sixth grade (graduation)." "The unit potluck was too large; facilities [we not available for that size crowd."

[4]For this question, the following comment was added: "Don't have teachers go on teaching time."

Sample 32 (Continued)

DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD CONTINUE:	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
- the workshop for making games for children, as in Title I this year?[5]	32	1	3
- the newsletters from classes?	32	1	2
- the school newsletter?	36	0	0
- having conferences in students' homes?[6]	16	8	9
- sending questionnaires home to ask parents' opinions on school-related topics?	32	1	4

[5]For this question, the following comments were added: "Definitely." "Extend the game workshop include teachers and parents of all primary grades."

[6]For this question, the following comments were added: "Not for everyone; [we] should be careful on amount and why." "Only if necessary or [for] one conference, not conferences." "This could be taken advantage of by parents."

Sample 32 (Continued)

DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD CONTINUE:	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
- student presentations at PTA?[7]	30	1	1
- notices sent home with the oldest child?[8]	30	1	5

COMMENTS

"[We] have to continue to give many opportunities for parents to become involved in the school. Newsletters and student projects are very good means of attaining this objective."

"Many of these things have been done [in the past], so although I did not notice any improvement, I feel they are necessary and being done well."

[7]For this question, the following comments were added: "Student presentations at PTA are okay as long as it isn't always square dancing or singing." "Maybe ask the parents what kind of program they would like and topics they want discussed." "The purpose of PTA is not entertainment. It is for parents and teachers to get together for the benefit of the child. I'm all for student presentations at other times, but not at PTA." "Only if the teacher wishes."

[8]For this question, the following comment was added: "Notices should be sent home with all children. Any note worth going home should be given every chance to get there. [In] some homes the youngest is most responsible. In others the older children [are more responsible]."

Sample 32 (Continued)

COMMENTS
"Some of the activities were good, but perhaps would lose effectiveness if repeated a great many times." (mentioned twice) "There was a very definite effort to provide open, two-way communication between the school and home and the home and the school." " _____ has the best communications of any of the schools which I serve. I encourage _____ to continue searching for ways of effectively communicating with the community. Ke up the good work."

Sample 33

Parent Questionnaire - Results

1. For how many years have you had children at _____ School? $\bar{X}$ = 5.74 years

QUESTION	MUCH IMPROVED	SOMEWHAT IMPROVED	NOT IMPROVED	WO
2. One of our goals this year has been to improve the communication from the school to the home. How would you judge the communication from the school this year?	95	104	15	
3. We have also attempted to provide more opportunities for parents and staff members to discuss school-related topics. How would you judge the opportunities for you to discuss your concerns and questions?	89	114	11	
4. Our third goal has been to provide more opportunities for you to become involved in what is happening at school. How would you judge your opportunities to become involved?	91	101	20	

Sample 33 (Continued)

QUESTION	MUCH IMPROVED	SOMEWHAT IMPROVED	NOT IMPROVED	WO
5. We have tried to provide more opportunities for you to help in making decisions affecting your children and the school. How would you judge your opportunities to participate in decision making at the school?	74	100	35	
6. Another goal has been to try to solve problems and concerns of parents regarding the school. How would you judge your opportunities to have your school-related problems solved?	70	118	18	
7. We have attempted to create an atmosphere in which you would feel free to approach teachers and/or the principal with your concerns related to the school. How would you judge your opportunities to discuss your concerns?	134	70	8	
8. Finally, we have tried to have the school reflect the wishes and desires of the parents which it serves. How would you judge the success of the school in this goal?	76	105	20	

Sample 33 (Continued)

DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD CONTINUE:	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
- the chance for you to see more than one teacher during conferences, as in Unit C the last conference time?[1]	150	19	55
- the chance to tell the teachers what you would like to discuss during conferences, as in Unit C the last conference time?	167	15	40
- the awards for students when they complete their work, as in Units A and B this year?	158	5	59
- the unit potluck, as in Unit E this year?	105	9	104
- the coffees for answering your questions?	111	25	83
- the workshop for making games for your children, as in Title I this year?	123	9	88

[1] For this question, the following comments were added: "I think it would be better if there could be more than one teacher during conferences. Maybe have 2 or 3 teachers in one room to discuss the child so the other teachers would be aware of the child's behavior in other classes."

Sample 33 (Continued)

DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD CONTINUE:	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
- the newsletters from classes?	209	5	11
- the school newsletter?[2]	217	2	7
- having conferences in students' homes?[3]	43	83	98
- sending questionnaires home to ask your opinions on school-related topics (report cards, etc.)?	212	9	6

[2]For this question, the following comments were added: "In the school newsletter, let everyone know what every class is doing. We really want to know what is going on; children do forget." "Keep up ' _____ 's Link.' Could each sixth-grade classroom have the opportunity to publish o issue?"

[3]For this question, the following comments were added: "If necessary for some reason." (mention twice) "Conferences in our homes might be very difficult for the teachers timewise." "[Home visits are] acceptable only when it's absolutely impossible for one parent or guardian to come t school during regular school hours. The teachers' time otherwise is too valuable to spend commu from house to house, although in some cases a home visit does give necessary insight to problems

Sample 33 (Continued)

DO YOU THINK WE SHOULD CONTINUE:	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW
- student presentations at PTA?[4]	149	24	54
- notices sent home with the oldest child?[5]	184	15	24

[4]For this question, the following comments were added: "Not unless more children are able to participate. I don't think one room should do all the programs at PTA if all the children don't participate on that grade level." "Student presentations at PTA are very good, but not the same teacher and grade most of the time. Should be different each time until all have a chance to participate."

[5]For this question, the following comments were added: "I feel each child should bring a note hom Otherwise the young ones feel they can't be held responsible." "I think notices should be sent home with all children, as sometimes one [child] is not present, or one thinks the other has it s that child does not always bring one home." (mentioned twice) "Send out notices in the mail bec a lot of them sent by the kids never make it home. So you never know what you miss." (Mentioned twice) "I think the young children can handle notices and I would trust them." "Even the oldest child can lose notices at times."

Sample 33 (Continued)

COMMENTS

Comments related to the questionnaire:

"Most of these questions don't really apply to me since this is my first year of having a child in school." (mentioned 12 times)

"I approve of goals stated on other side (questions 1-8) but was not distressed about past efforts." (mentioned twice)

"It was hard for us to answer these questions, because we have not been faced with any school problems."

Comments related to other schools:

"This school seems more concerned on a lot of topics than some other schools our children have attended and seems more advanced."

"Our children have been to two other schools besides _____. I feel this school has a very open and friendly working relationship between students, faculty, and parents. Our children really enjoy being students at _____."

General positive comments:

"I think we have a great school. Keep up the good work!" (mentioned four times)

" _____ School provides the opportunity for parents to get as involved as they choose. The opportunity is there. I feel the problem is making more parents aware of the willingness t be open to their ideas. A lot of this could be done by word of mouth and talking up the schoo by parents as well as staff."

COMMENTS

General positive comments (Continued)

"I found teachers, secretaries and principal quite willing to discuss any problems or question that came up. I'm pleased."

"I feel you are doing a great deal to improve school conditions and set up a line of communication between school and parents."

"This is the last year we will have a child at _____ School. It's been a pleasant experience for all three of our children. They have learned more at _____ School than the school previously attended. Thank you goes to the teachers!"

"I feel there has been an overall improvement in parent-school communications this year. Keep up the good work. I want teachers to feel free to call me at any time if my child has any problems."

"I have found _____ to be a very cooperative school and have no problems communicating wi the people there."

"I have always felt I could call school if I had a question and I have always gotten an answer right away. Keep up the good work."

"I'm sincerely pleased with all phases of the school that I'm aware of. I'm especially glad to see how open and approachable all the school personnel have been. Please continue sound, consi tent discipline."

Sample 33 (Continued)

COMMENTS

General positive comments (Continued)

"I think _____ School does a very good job of developing good children. I think the teachers and staff really help children enjoy school, but also teach them respect for adults and other classmates."

"The school seems to be advancing rapidly in the right direction; however, some of the teachers are still 10 years behind and don't seem willing to change."

Suggestions for improvement:

"More emphasis should be put on care and respect of others and other people's property."

"I don't like school doors being locked when I try to get in for my child or any other reason."

"I feel that more time must be given to the children to finish a project or lesson. If they aren't given the time, then they shouldn't be marked bad."

"I would like a session with all the parents and teachers of the same grade. I would like to know what the child will be taught and how at the beginning of the school year."

"I think there should be more basics for grades than grading on gym and other less appropriate subjects."

"I think all new students should be given a list of all school activities going on at the beginning of the school year."

"I would like to see a supply list of materials needed for the next year sent home with the last report card. That way parents could start rounding up materials in the summer."

Sample 33 (Continued)

COMMENTS

Suggestions for improvement (Continued)

"When there is a problem the teacher should have more time to help. Otherwise let the parent know instead of waiting until report card time when the parent is shocked."

"I think there should be fair discipline out on the school yeard during recess."

Parents saw an increase in their access to the school and some improvement in the school's legitimacy. Parents desired to continue all of the school-community relations activities except having conferences in the homes.

Informal Formative and Summative Program Evaluation

The school-community relations program was also informally evaluated by the program coordinator. First, the presence of the program coordinator raised the awareness of most staff members to the necessity of improving school-community relations. Several commented that they had realized their growing awareness, interest, and concern. For example, while voting, a teacher in subunit C overheard the negative comments of several poll watchers about instructional materials. Because of his increased awareness of the importance of good relations, he took 45 minutes to visit with the poll watchers about their feelings.

A second factor which influenced the school-community relations program was the success of staff members in convincing others to implement new ideas. Often they were more effective than the program coordinator. For example, the success of several teachers in using the commendation forms helped convince other teachers to become involved in this reward system. A subunit C teacher was persuaded to participate in a question and answer coffee by the positive experiences of a teacher in subunit B.

The program coordinator observed that the task of fully implementing a school-community relations program in one year is very difficult, particularly if the program implementor is not working full time. The

needs assessment alone requires at least 3 months of full-time effort. School-wide planning and coordination requires a full month; subunit planning requires another month. Operationalizing the plans requires at least 2 to 3 months if no unforeseen difficulties arise. Finally, evaluating the plans and using the results for future decision making demands, at a minimum, 1 month. Therefore, a minimum of 8 months of full-time effort is required to implement a school-community relations program. If a principal were implementing the program, more time would be needed because of the numerous additional demands on his or her time.

The program coordinator also noted that it was difficult for the school staff to remain program oriented. In spite of her continual effort to select activities based on assessed needs, the coordinator frequently had to remind the staff of this focus. Because of other demands on the staff members' time, they tended to be crisis oriented and had difficulty thinking about long-range projects. Many had difficulty understanding the role of the program coordinator until the program had been fully implemented.

Utilization of Program Evaluation Data for Future Program Planning

Formal and informal evaluation results were incorporated into plans for the following year of the school-community relations program. These plans included: more attention to nonparents in the school community, increased community member involvement at the school, more opportunities for community members to participate in educational decision making at the school, continued communication about ongoing events at the school, emphasis on answering questions raised at the

question and answer coffees, and continued analysis of the school-community relations issues which existed in the community.

The needs assessment revealed that nonparents were not well informed about what was happening at the school and had to depend upon secondary sources to receive information. The school staff decided to make a concerted effort to communicate with and involve nonparents. They intended to accomplish this goal by distributing the school newsletter to nonparents, inviting nonparents to be volunteers or speakers, inviting more nonparents to question and answer coffees, and having more student performances at nursing homes and shopping malls where their accomplishments would be visible to nonparents.

Future plans also included having more parents help during field trips and in classrooms, the Instructional Materials Center, and the home environment. Plans were made for assessing community resources and using as many available resources as possible. Another instructional game make-and-take workshop was planned by several subunits, in addition to the Title I teachers.

Consideration was given to providing new opportunities for parent participation in the educational program of their children, PTA expenditures, lunchroom problems, hazardous traffic areas, student orientation to junior high school, curriculum, and other areas of concern. The role of the existing Parent Advisory Council was to be expanded to assume an active role in decision making. Inservice sessions on parent-teacher conferences, the role of a Parent Advisory Council, and the effects of parent participation in decision making were

also included in the plans. These sessions would help the staff make more effective use of parental participation.

Future school communications would focus on current events and on answering questions raised at the question and answer coffees. The staff would consider the concerns expressed in parent-teacher conferences and telephone conversations. Additional community interviews were to be conducted. The school newsletter was to be continued; more communication with the home through telephone calls, notes, and home visits was planned. Presentations by students at PTA meetings were also being considered. A fall orientation of parents to subunits was planned to inform parents about what their children would be learning and what the expectations of the subunits included. Subunit or grade-level potlucks with student programs were to be substituted for several PTA meetings.

The school planned to continue analyzing the school-community relations issues which existed in the community and using the findings as the basis for future activities. The staff also intended to continue using the five school-community relations processes by themselves, without the program coordinator's help.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of the preceding chapters was to describe and illustrate the procedure for setting up a school-community relations program. The first chapter described the recommended components of such a program. The second, third, fourth, and fifth chapters explained the procedure for implementing a program with these components. Each chapter included a description of the goals, an explanation of the process, and an illustrative case study of one step to setting up a school-community relations program.

By following the recommended sequence and suggestions, a school will establish an effective school-community relations program. Such a program will result in improved relations between the school and the community it serves. Community members should be more supportive of the school and its program; they should come to believe the school and staff are more easily accessible. Increased student growth and development in both the cognitive and affective domains may be an additional benefit.

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11/79